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Karnataka tables bill to criminalise social boycott with 3-year jail term

BELAGAVI

Karnataka tabled bills to criminalise social boycott by caste panchayats and amend Greater Bengaluru Governance, adding key officials and MPs to the authority and clarifying ward divisions

The Karnataka government on Thursday tabled the Karnataka Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2025 in the Assembly, aiming to prohibit and criminalise social boycotts imposed on individuals or groups, especially by caste panchayats. Presented by Social Welfare Minister H. C. Mahadevappa in Belagavi, the bill lists 20 forms of social boycott, including refusal to work with or hire a person, denial of access to services and opportunities, obstruction from social or religious events, social ostracism, blocking access to facilities, and cutting ties.

The bill notes that unconstitutional practices such as boycotts and punishments by extra-judicial bodies like caste panchayats continue in several communities, causing harassment and violations of dignity. These practices foster disharmony and ill feeling, and existing laws are considered inadequate to address them. The proposed legislation seeks to eradicate such practices and prescribes penalties, including imprisonment of up to three years or fines up to ₹1 lakh, or both. Any assembly convened to discuss imposing a social boycott will be deemed unlawful, carrying a fine of up to ₹1 lakh. Aiding or abetting such actions will attract similar penalties. All offences under the bill will be cognizable and bailable.

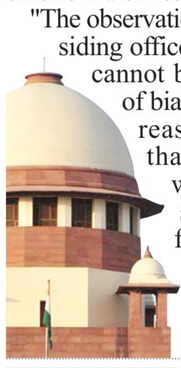
SC Rejects Prajwal's Plea to Transfer Cases

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to entertain a plea of former Janata Dal MP Prajwal Revanna to transfer the trial of two criminal cases before the special MP/MLA court in Bengaluru to another court in the city on the ground of bias.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi told Revanna's counsel that observations of the judge cannot be a ground of bias as it dismissed his plea.

"The observations of the presiding officer of the court cannot be the ground of bias. We have no reason to doubt that the officer would not be swayed by the fact that the petitioner was found guilty in the earlier case... and will confine his conclusions on the basis of evidence led in the pending trial," the bench observed.



Senior advocates Siddharth Luthra and Siddarth Dave, representing Revanna, said that the judge made some adverse comments against the lawyers too, which requires expunction. Justice Bagchi said that lawyers cannot hold judicial officers to ransom and make any allegations against them. "Mr Dave, these remarks were inspired by the high court order itself on the same lines. You cannot hold the judicial officers to ransom. This lawyer appears in collateral cases and withdraws the vakalatnama time and again," Justice Bagchi said. CJI Kant said that Revanna's counsel can furnish an apology before the high court as it is the most unethical thing to allege bias just because some observations were made by the presiding officer.

Siddaramaiah Hosts Farmers Meeting

Vows Prompt Resolution of Issues

The CM reiterated that the govt is committed to supplying quality electricity to farmers for seven hours daily and will hold discussions with officials to increase supply as power generation improves

BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met farmers' organizations at Suvarna Soudha, assuring action on issues including sugarcane pricing, milk incentives, electricity supply, and crop damage compensation. He reiterated a seven-hour quality power promise and pledged honest, farmer-friendly governance as representatives welcomed ongoing government measures.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday held a meeting with representatives of various farmers' organizations at Suvarna Soudha to discuss pressing agricultural issues. Speaking at the meeting, the Chief Minister assured that the government has already taken several steps to address the problems of all farmers, including sugarcane growers, and that every demand would be carefully examined for a suitable solution.

The Chief Minister highlighted the state government's initiative to provide a ₹5 incentive per litre of milk. Currently, with the daily purchase of one crore litres of milk, farmers are receiving ₹5 crore as incentive support.

To prevent malpractice in sugarcane weighing and ensure scientific fixation of cane prices, measures have been implemented in sugar factories. Siddaramaiah also assured that amendments made by the previous government to the Land Reforms Act would be rolled back.

During the meeting, farmers' representatives highlighted issues such as power supply for irrigation, the need for 12-hour continuous electricity, restarting illegal canal schemes, increasing crop damage compensation due to wild animals, establishing a corpus fund for procurement of farmers' produce, appointing veterinary doctors at the panchayat level, and staffing the Sugar Commissioner's office in Belagavi with necessary officials.

In response, the Chief Minister reiterated that the government is committed to supplying quality electricity to farmers for seven hours daily and will hold discussions with officials to increase supply as generation improves. He emphasized that the government would act honestly and will not indulge in any deception regarding farmers' welfare.

Acknowledging the government's proactive measures, representatives of various farmer organizations felicitated CM Siddaramaiah during the event, expressing confidence in the state's farmer-friendly policies.

No leadership change in Karnataka claims Yathindra Siddaramaiah

BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah on Thursday reiterated that there is no leadership change in Karnataka.

The Congress MLC further said that there was no power tussle in the state. Speculation about a leadership change had intensified after the Congress government crossed the halfway mark of its five-year term on November 20, fuelled by talk of an alleged power-sharing arrangement between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar dating back to 2023.

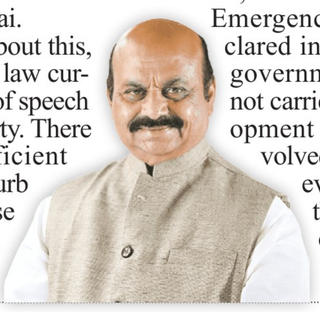
Recently, the chief minister and deputy CM held breakfast meetings at each other's residences on instructions from the party high command—a move seen as an attempt to pause the leadership tussle and signal Siddaramaiah's continuation as chief minister for now, especially ahead of the Belagavi legislature session. They also clarified that they will abide by the party high command's decision.

"There is no tussle over CM post. This I have told you already. Now everything is clear. The high command has clearly said as of now there is no change in leadership," Yathindra told reporters here.

The MLC has been repeatedly claiming that the high command has made it clear that there is no leadership change in the state.

BJP to Launch Legal Battle Against Hate Speech Law: Basavaraj Bommai

BENGALURU



The Karnataka Government has introduced a law against hate speech, which is unconstitutional. The BJP strongly condemn this, and it will launch a legal battle against it, said former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai.

Posting on X about this, he stated that this law curtails the freedom of speech and personal liberty. There are already sufficient laws in place to curb hate speech. Those laws can be used. But by bringing a law that prescribes ten years of imprisonment, the government is plotting to send to jail—through non-bailable warrants—those who speak against the government or against their party. This is against democracy. "In one sense, it feels as though an Emergency has been declared in Karnataka. The government, which has not carried out any development work and is involved in corruption in every sector—one that has siphoned off funds meant for the poor.

Assam, Arunachal coordinate search for missing victims

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday expressed his condolences over the deaths in the truck accident in Arunachal Pradesh, and said both states were working closely to locate the people who have been missing.

At least 18 people from Assam's Tinsukia district have been killed, and three others are missing as the truck fell into a gorge in Arunachal Pradesh. Sarma said that he is deeply pained by the passing away of the people from Assam in the accident.

"Our district administration is in touch with relevant authorities in Arunachal Pradesh and all necessary assistance is being provided," he said in a post on X.

Sarma said relief and rescue teams are prioritising locating missing people. "We are also ensuring that medical help is provided to those in need. My thoughts and prayers are with the grieving families in this tough time," he said in the post, tagging Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu.

The Chief Minister's Office in a separate post said the Tinsukia district administration is coordinating closely with Arunachal Pradesh authorities, as teams work through harsh terrain for rescue and relief efforts.

GAINING INSIGHT

Students watching Council session in progress at Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi on Thursday ▸ CH PHOTO

US GOLD CARD

It's a shame students have to go back to their countries: Trump

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

Trump's new USD 1 million Gold Card visa lets companies buy long-term residency for top graduates, offering a faster, stronger alternative to green cards.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday unveiled a new "Gold Card" visa, a million-dollar pathway to long-term residency and eventual citizenship for high-skilled immigrants. He said the programme addresses the "shame" of losing top graduates from American universities—particularly from India and China—who are often forced to leave the country after completing their studies. Speaking at a White House roundtable with IBM CEO Arvind Krishna and Dell Technologies CEO Michael Dell, Trump said the Gold Card will help companies retain elite talent from institutions such as Wharton, Harvard and MIT. Many firms, he argued, hesitate to hire international students because of uncertainty over their ability to remain in the U.S., a concern raised repeatedly by business leaders including Apple CEO Tim Cook.

The programme allows companies to sponsor workers by contributing USD 2 million, while individuals may apply by paying USD 1 million. Applicants must also pay a USD 15,000 processing fee and pass full vetting before gaining the right to apply for citizenship after five years. The administration claims the card offers faster, more advantageous benefits than traditional green cards, which Trump described as "impossible to get."

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the initiative aims to attract only the "best people." Corporations may replace the beneficiary on a card over time, but only one person may hold it at any given moment. He argued the Gold Card would reverse trends of lower earnings among green card holders by focusing on high-income, highly skilled applicants.

QUICK READ

K'taka Sees 17-Lakh Drop in Govt School Enrolment

BELAGAVI

Enrolment in government-run schools in Karnataka has dropped by 17 lakh over the past 15 years, Minister Madhu Bangarappa informed the Legislative Assembly on Thursday. Minister for School Education attributed the decline to parents preferring English-medium education, a growing interest in central syllabi, migration, and the increasing number of private schools. The information was provided in a written reply to BJP MLA and former education minister S Suresh Kumar.

IndiGo offers ₹10,000 vouchers to its passengers

NEW DELHI

IndiGo, facing major operational disruptions, announced on Thursday that it will provide Rs 10,000 travel vouchers to passengers whose flights were cancelled or severely delayed between December 3 and 5. This compensation is in addition to the mandatory payout under DGCA norms. The airline said it regrets that many passengers were stranded for hours at various airports and were significantly affected by congestion during this period.

QUICK READ

Take action against illegal buildings: Commissioner Ramesh

BENGALURU

A workshop was held at the Bengaluru South City Corporation (BDMC) to educate the officials of the corporation on the procedure to prevent the construction of unauthorised structures in violation of the maps. Delegation of powers has been given to evict buildings which are being constructed in violation of the map sanctioning or unauthorised without obtaining the map sanction. Commissioner N Ramesh instructed the officials to act as per the allocation of powers and to work on priority in court and Lokayukta cases. Chief Engineer KV Ravi, Additional Director of Town Planning Girish, Joint Commissioners Madhu, Satish Babu and other officials were present.

Cultural preview: Yakshagana performance on Dec 13

BENGALURU

A Yakshagana performance titled 'Yaksha Bhava Sangama' is being organized by guest artists from the south on December 13 at the Ravindra Kalakshetra on JC Road. These performances are being organized by Vinayak Bhatt. 'Bheeshma Parva' composed by Devidas and 'Subhadra Kalyana' composed by Hattiyangadi Ram Bhatt will be performed. Kondadakuli Ramachandra, Thotimane Ganapathi Hegde, Thandimane Sripada Bhatt, Hillur Manju, Prashant Hegde, Nagesh Kulimane, Athreya Gaonkar, Vinayak Kalagadde, Ashok Bhatt Siddapura, K.G. Manjunath, Chapparamane Sridhar Hegde, Sadashiva Malavalli and Ramakrishna Bhatt will participate in the festival.

Students need a research environment: Dr BG Prasad

BENGALURU

An educational ecosystem conducive to research is essential for students,' said Dr BG Prasad, Principal of Dayanand Sagar Engineering College. He was speaking at a research conference on 'Innovation and Sustainable Integration for Global Impact' organized at Dayanand Sagar College of Engineering. Dr J Sridevi, Director General, Central Power Research Institute, Bengaluru, gave important information on research, global collaboration, and sustainable technological progress. Vice Principal Dr. V. Suma reviewed the conference. Dr. Gopal Patra, Director, CSIR-4PE, Bengaluru, and Dr. Shyam Vasudeva Rao, Technical Director, Maastricht University, Netherlands, participated. Dayanand Sagar Institute Joint Secretary Nishan H. Sagar, Vice Principal Dr HK Ramaraju praised the students.

'Good Work Gets Friendship, Mistakes Won't Be Forgiven': Alok Kumar

Alok Kumar, who took charge as the state Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services Department, has given a strong message to the officers and staff

BENGALURU

Alok Kumar, the new Director General of Police of the State Prisons and Correctional Services Department, has warned that if the officers do a good job in the prison department, their rank does not matter to me and I consider them as friends. However, officers who are intentionally involved in illegal activities will have to be treated differently. He has been appointed as the State Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services Department and assumed office today at his office on Seshadri Road.

Speaking on the occasion, Alok Kumar said, I have previously visited various prisons in the state, including Bailahongala. I have also raided and inspected the Parappana Agrahara Central Prison many times in the past. Some reforms are also important in this department. We will hold consultations with the officials, understand the problems properly and take further steps.

Every officer and staff in the department is important, and only they can control irregularities. Those who do good work are always encouraged. But those who do wrong will be punished. Sometimes I will not be too strict with small unintentional mistakes. But I will not tolerate intentional involvement in irregularities, warned Alok Kumar. The state government on Wednesday promoted Alok Kumar, who was the Additional Director General of Police, State Police Training Centre, and transferred him as the State Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services Department. Meanwhile, B. Dayanand, who was earlier the ADGP, Prisons Department, was transferred as the ADGP, Training Division Jail officials conducted an inspection at Parappana Agrahara Central Jail on Tuesday night and found prohibited items. During this, 14 mobile phones, 9 SIM cards, 5 mobile phone chargers, 2 earphones, and 10 different types of knives were found. In total, 67 mobile phones, 14 chargers, 48 SIM cards, 10 earphones, Rs. 60,880 in cash, and 10 sharp weapons have been found so far, and a total of 6 cases have been registered, according to prison sources.

Rowdy-Sheeter's Roadside B'day Stunt Triggers Public Outrage

BENGALURU

Bengaluru has once again been jolted by videos of a rowdy-sheeter creating chaos on public roads, igniting a heated debate on law enforcement and the growing trend of criminal glorification on social media. A series of clips showing youths shouting, revving bikes, and cutting a birthday cake in the middle of the road have gone viral, drawing sharp criticism from citizens. The videos feature notorious rowdy-sheeter Ajay Kumar alias Chinni, who operates online under the name C Boss. In the viral footage, Ajay is seen celebrating his birthday in grand style on a busy stretch, accompanied by a convoy of bikes and followers. The blatant disregard for public safety has raised serious questions on how such activities go unchecked. Ajay Kumar is no stranger to police files. In 2017, he was arrested by Jalahalli police for the brutal murder of rowdy-sheeter Moni, who was stabbed 24 times on the face. Despite being linked to cases of robbery, dacoity, and ganja peddling, Ajay and his gang project themselves as social workers on social media, gaining thousands of followers in the process. Police records show 21 cases registered against him across Jalahalli, Yeshwanthpur, Gangamma Gudi, Vidyaranyapura, and Kodigehalli police stations. Yet, his Instagram account—run under the alias Krantiveera Madakari—openly posts videos flaunting bike stunts, group buildups, and self-styled "heroic" acts.

Doctors warn of medical misinformation on social media

BENGALURU

A 36-year-old patient, who recently visited the outpatient department of a city hospital with kidney dysfunction had an alarming creatinine score of 4.5 (the normal range is around 1). When doctors investigated further, they found the individual was following a detox therapy promoted by a social media influencer, a regimen being recommended for weight loss but one that ultimately harmed the kidneys. We did not exactly know what the composition of the detox water was as it had some powders, boosters, and other ingredients. But this is not the first time we have encountered a case like this. We also had a patient in their early 40s who lost the golden period during a stroke and ended up with permanent paralysis of one side as they followed the advice of someone on social media when they had weakness in one side of the body, said Dr Harish Malapura, Intensive Care Physician and Infectious Disease Specialist, Director, Institute of Critical Care Medicine, Kauvery Hospital, Marathahalli. Recently, China introduced a regulation that bars content creators from producing videos or posts on serious topics such as medicine, law, and finance unless they hold relevant academic degrees. In Bengaluru, doctors are similarly calling for government regulation, citing rising instances of patients landing in emergency rooms after following online medical advice.

> Once the doctors notice a few parameters in the reports, which are not under ideal levels, they go seeking reels to answer their questions or suggest easy therapies, said Dr SN Aravinda, Lead Consultant Internal Medicine, Aster RV Hospital.

Dr SN Aravinda, Lead Consultant Internal Medicine, Aster RV Hospital, said, weight reduction methods, detox therapies, and immunity boosters have become buzzwords across social media, often propagated by influencers describing themselves as lifestyle coaches or wellness coaches.

Doctors warn many of these trends lead not only to digestive issues and, in severe cases, heavy metal poisoning, liver damage, and kidney failure. Younger people, especially those in the 20–40 age group, are often influenced by social media. Most of them have annual health checkups by their companies.

Cab driver arrested for ruckus with BMTC staff

BENGALURU

Another road rage case has been reported in Bengaluru. A cab driver allegedly assaulted the driver and conductor of a BMTC bus and hurled abuses at them in Bengaluru. The incident took place at Hegde Nagar under Sampigehalli police station limits.

It is learnt that the scuffle started when a cab hit a BMTC bus on its way to Yelahanka from Shivaji Nagar. The cab driver, identified as Narasimhaiah, followed the bus for about a kilometre and chased it. Later, Hegde intercepted the bus near the city and started a ruckus.

When BMTC bus driver Nagesh and conductor Kenchappa tried to defuse the situation, an enraged cab driver Narasimhaiah abused them and physically assaulted them. The assault was captured by the passengers in the bus on their mobile phones, which is a testimony to the outrageous behaviour of the cab driver.

When the incident escalated, driver Nagesh immediately diverted the bus straight to Sampigehalli police station. The accused cab driver Narasimhaiah was taken into custody by the Sampigehalli police. The police have registered a case and further legal action is being taken.

Special Camp on Dec 13 to Speed Up Voter Roll Mapping

BENGALURU

A special camp will be held on December 13, 2025, under the "Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls – 2025," across all polling stations within the seven Assembly constituencies of the Bengaluru North City Corporation limits—151–K.R. Puram, 156–Mahalakshmi Layout, 157–Malleswaram, 158–Hebbal, 159–Pulakeshinagar, 160–Sarvagnanagar and 161–C.V. Raman Nagar.

As directed by the Hon'ble Chief Electoral Officer, the camp aims to accelerate the process of mapping voters listed in the 2025 electoral rolls to the records of the 2002 rolls. To ensure uniform progress, the drive will take place simultaneously at all polling stations. Teachers assigned as polling station officers have been instructed to perform camp duties after school hours or from 2:00 PM onward, while non-teaching polling staff will handle the camp work from the morning. Public awareness is being created through daily waste-collection vehicles and printed pamphlets distributed across neighbourhoods. Each polling station will display the mobile numbers of its respective polling officers, enabling citizens to reach them directly for voter-mapping support.

Residents are urged to verify their voter details, rectify errors, and actively cooperate in linking their 2025 voter information with the 2002 records to ensure accuracy in the electoral roll.

Sunil Kumar Seeks Quick Finish to Mosque Road, MM Road Works

BENGALURU

White topping work has been taken up on Mosque Road and MM Road, and Bengaluru North City Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar has instructed officials to ensure the work is completed promptly.

During his inspection of various locations in the Pulakeshinagar Division, the Commissioner reviewed ongoing development works and directed officials to complete the construction and repair of footpaths on Mosque Road and MM Road by the end of January.

Ensure Water Flow Into Shoulder Drains:

He instructed officials to create proper gradients on the road surface to allow rainwater to flow easily into the shoulder drains and to take necessary measures. Follow Safety Measures Near Open Drains: At several locations, drains have been left open. The

Commissioner directed officials to implement adequate safety measures to ensure the public is not inconvenienced.

Joint Commissioner Mohammed Naem Momin, along with concerned Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, and other officials, were present during the inspection.

People's Rights under Threat amid Global Crisis, Say Activists

BENGALURU

The ongoing global economic crisis has triggered a surge in human rights violations worldwide, and India is no exception, said M.N. Sriram, State Coordinator of the Centre for the Defense of Democratic Rights and Secularism (CFDRS). He was speaking at an event organised in the city to mark International Human Rights Day.

Sriram said that continuing conflicts across several countries have intensified rights violations, adding that imperialist tendencies are on the rise. "Serious efforts are not being made to stop wars or protect human rights," he lamented.

He also pointed to worrying trends within India, noting that attempts to suppress people's rights have assumed multiple forms. Referring to the recent special revision of the electoral rolls, he said, "Efforts to deprive citizens of their voting rights through such revisions are not a good sign."

Advocate Surendra Babu stressed that civil struggles remain the only effective path to reclaiming human rights. "Many nations have succeeded through people's movements. Their example should guide us as well," he said.

CFDRS State Organiser N. Ravi observed that the nation has travelled far from the democracy envisioned during the freedom struggle.

"We fought British colonial rule to establish democracy, but today the system largely serves the wealthy, while ordinary people continue to struggle. Strengthening our collective fight has become essential," he said.

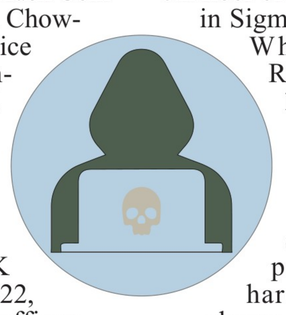
State organisers T.V.S. Raju and Somashekar Gowda also addressed the gathering, while law college students raised slogans in support of people's rights.

AWARENESS ON CYBER CRIME

Cybercrime Gang Cons Victims with Fake Microsoft Support

BENGALURU

Investigations into the transnational cybercrime syndicate involving technical staff from Bengaluru duping American citizens revealed that the accused targeted at least 150 victims and robbed them of $10,000 each (Rs 13.5 crore) on average since this August. The police last month raided Musk Communications in Whitefield and arrested 21 suspects. The fraudsters impersonated Microsoft technical support staff and cited fake 'Federal Trade Commission (FTC)' violations to extort money. Additionally, the police arrested an individual identified as Ravi Chouhan from Ahmedabad, who recruited around 85 staffers in the city. A senior IPS officer said the accused made the victims deposit money in bitcoins by depositing them in Bitcoin ATMs, which are kiosks that connect to the Bitcoin network, allowing transactions with crypto currencies. We are in the process of extracting the bank details of the victim customers, and as of now, we have found that at least 150 victims from the US and UK were made to deposit around $10,000 into various Bitcoin ATMs, he said. Meanwhile, police arrested a youth from Ahmedabad, identified as Ravi Chauhan, for recruiting the staffers at Musk Communication. With Chowhan landing in police custody, the number of arrested persons rises to 22. Three kingpins are yet to be found. They have been targeting the victims in the UK and USA since 2022, an investigating officer said. Acting on a credible tipoff, teams from Cyber Command's special cell and sleuths of the cybercrime police station, Whitefield division, raided the office of Musk Communications on the 6th floor of the Delta building in Sigma Soft Tech Park, Whitefield Main Road, on November 14 and 15. The two-day operation, with a search warrant, resulted in the seizure of computers, laptops, hard disks, mobile phones, and other devices. All 21 staffers present in the office were arrested and produced before a local court, which remanded them in police custody. Investigations revealed that Musk Communications rented a sprawling 4,500 sqft office space in August this year for a monthly rent of Rs 5 lakhs. The gang allegedly deployed malicious Facebook advertisements targeted specifically at US users. These ads contained embedded code masquerading as legitimate security alerts or service links. Once a user clicked on the ad, the code froze the computer and triggered a pop-up claiming to be from Microsoft global technical support, displaying a fake helpline number, police explained.



QUICK READ

Applications invited for adoption of stray dogs

Kavital

A special campaign has been launched under the "Be the Guardian of Stray Dogs" initiative to provide humane protection and care for stray dogs. Town Panchayat Chief Officer Jaspaal Singh has announced that applications are now open for interested members of the public as well as registered voluntary organizations. Individuals or institutions involved in animal protection, care, and welfare activities can adopt stray dogs. Those who adopt must ensure a safe living environment, provide timely medical treatment, and must not subject the animals to any form of cruelty. The adoption process will follow the ABC (Animal Birth Control) guidelines. For more details, applicants are requested to contact the Town Panchayat authorities.

Kala Pratibhotsava Program to be Held on December 18 and 19

Vijayapura

The Department of Kannada and Culture has organized the Kala Pratibhotsava program on December 18 and 19 at Sri Hanumantaraya Rangamandira in the city. The event aims to recognize the artistic talents of children and youth, encourage them, and promote the growth of cultural and artistic heritage. Applications are invited from child artistes, specially-abled artistes, and young talents. Interested candidates may submit their applications along with all supporting documents in person at the office of the Assistant Director, Department of Kannada and Culture, Sri Hanumantaraya Rangamandira, Station Road, Pandharpur, by December 16 at 5:30 PM, according to a statement issued by the Assistant Director of the Kannada and Culture Department.

Employees Present Issues Before the Administration

Kalyana Karnataka Employees Raise Administrative, Promotion Issues

BIDAR

During the district-level joint consultation meeting held in the city on Thursday, office-bearers of the District Unit of the Karnataka State Government Employees' Association raised various employee-related issues before the administration.

They appealed that district-level administrative issues, including service-related facilities, should be resolved, and that the government should be advised to address state-level problems. They stated that amendments to Article 371(J) have resulted in injustice to Kalyana Karnataka employees in promotions, and demanded a single seniority list for the entire state instead of a separate one for Kalyana Karnataka.

They pointed out that only four hospitals in the district have been included under the Karnataka Arogya Sanjeevini Scheme and urged that more hospitals, including multi-specialty hospitals in Hyderabad, Solapur, Latur, and Udgir, be added. They also requested relocation of the KGID office currently situated on the third floor, instructions to all department heads to ensure salary payment on the 1st of every month, annual presentation of the Sarvottama Seva Award, organizing employee-friendly training and workshops, and preparing a special action plan to improve SSLC results.

A total of 26 demands were submitted in a memorandum by District Unit President Somasekhara Biradar Chidri, which he handed over to Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma.

The Deputy Commissioner assured that the administration would address the employees' issues and grievances.

Present at the meeting were State Council Member Rajkumar Malage, District Unit General Secretary Prabhuling Toogave, Treasurer Devappa Chamboļe, Senior Vice Presidents Gautam and Abdul Sattar Patel, Bhalki Taluk Unit President Chandrashekhar Bannale, Secretary Rajkumar Patil, Basavakalyan Taluk Unit President Dileep Uttam, Kamalnagar Taluk Unit President Sunil Kasture, Aurad Taluk Unit President Pandhari Ade, Hulsur Taluk Unit President Nagaraj Havanna, Chittaguppa member Shivakumar, and others.

Ministers Assure Private Educational Institutions' Association

Ministers Promise Grants, Simplified Recognition for Private Educational Institutions

BIDAR

School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa and Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre have assured that the government will soon take necessary steps to provide grants to unaided private schools and colleges established between 1995 and 2005.

They gave this assurance to the All Karnataka Unaided Private Educational Institutions' Association, which staged a protest in front of the Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi, where the Legislature session is underway.

The ministers stated that the issue of grants would be discussed with the Chief Minister and necessary funds would be allocated for this in the upcoming State Budget.

They informed that a three-member committee has already been formed to simplify the process of renewal of school and college recognition. After the committee studies the matter and submits its report, further action will be taken accordingly.

They acknowledged that private educational institutions in Kalyana Karnataka and other northern Karnataka regions are providing quality education to students. The role of teaching staff in improving academic results is highly significant, they said.

Earlier, the association's state president Revannasiddappa Jalade had demanded immediate sanction of grants to unaided schools and colleges established after 1995 and simplification of the recognition renewal process.

Eshwar Khandre expressed satisfaction that the demands of private educational institutions were being given special attention. He said the ministers' assurance has raised hopes that the key demands—grant-in-aid and simplified recognition procedures—will soon be fulfilled.

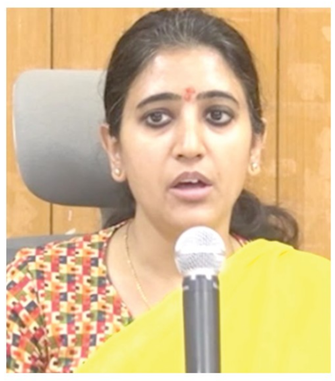
A large number of office-bearers and staff from private educational institutions across the state participated in the massive protest.

MLCs Shashil Namoshi, Puttanna, Sankanoor, Belagavi Urban Development Authority Chairman Chingale Lakshmanrao, S.S. Math, J.C. Shivappa, State Honorary President Mallikarjun Loni, Vice Presidents M. Moulaali and D.B. Nadaf, Secretary K. Gurunath Reddy, Joint Secretary Anil Jadhav, and others were present.

All children below 0–5 years must compulsorily receive Pulse Polio drops – DC Shilpa Sharma

Pulse Polio Immunization Program from Dec 21 to 24

BIDAR



The district administration will conduct the National Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign from December 21 to 24. Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma has directed health officials to ensure that every child below five years receives the Pulse Polio drops without fail. She chaired a preparatory meeting at the DC office to review arrangements for the successful execution of the campaign.

Sharma emphasized that no child should be left unvaccinated. On December 21, vaccination booths will operate at Anganwadi centres, community halls, and bus stands. Over the next three days, health workers will carry out door-to-door visits and also vaccinate children of migrant labourers arriving from other districts and states.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Dhyaneshwar Neeragudde said 996 booths, 11 mobile teams, and 70 transit teams—totalling 1,077 teams consisting of health staff, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and nursing students—will be deployed on the first day. From December 22 to 24, teams will visit 3,35,347 households to immunize any missed children.

District RCH Officer and National Pulse Polio Program Officer Shivashankar B. stated that the target is to vaccinate 2,13,372 children aged 0–5 years across rural and urban areas. A total of 2,154 vaccinators and 216 booth supervisors have been appointed, with taluk health officers and district-level nodal officers monitoring operations. He added that preparations are in progress to introduce the HPV vaccine for girls aged 5–14 to prevent cervical cancer.

WHO Kalaburagi SMO Dr. Anil Kumar Talikoti explained that although India was declared polio-free in 2014 after the last case in 2011, the campaign continues as a precaution due to ongoing cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The meeting was attended by IAS probationer Ramya Ranganath, district officials, health officers, and RCH staff.

Apprenticeship Fair on Dec 23: Invitation to Register

VIJAYAPURA

An Apprenticeship Fair under the Prime Minister's National Apprenticeship Training Scheme will be held on December 23, from 9 AM to 5 PM at BLDE ITI College, Ashram Road. ITI-passed candidates and employers can register through the NAPS portal. For more information, contact 9620848158, 9986123893 or 9886437517, or visit the nearest government or aided private ITI center.

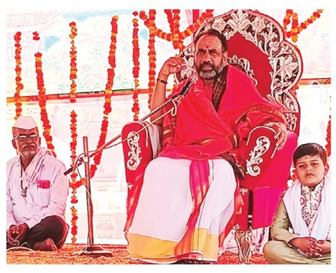
Revappayya's Binna Tradition Fair in Kanakatta Village

BALKI

"Faith cannot arise from logic alone; it grows only through emotions," said Shri Rajeshwar Shivacharya of the Mehakara Kattimani Hirematha institution.

He spoke at the religious gathering held during the Sadguru Revappayya Binna Holige-Ghee Fair at the Sadguru Shri Revappayya Mandir in Kanakatta village, Humnabad taluk. Shri Rajeshwar Shivacharya highlighted that Sadguru Revappayya dedicated his life to religion and the nation, performing miracles for the benefit of all, which remain relevant even today. Devotees recall that during the Binna event, if there was less ghee, Revappayya would miraculously add ghee to the well's water. Shivacharya emphasized that such miracles can only be understood when viewed with devotion rather than logic.

He added that the emotional world holds great power, and participating in the fair with heartfelt devotion inspires faith and promises solutions to our problems. Sadguru Revappayya treated all equally, regardless of caste or religion, visiting homes and blessing everyone.



Though people pass away, their power continues. The miracles of Shri Revappayya Navadgi, performed for the welfare of devotees, are now celebrated worldwide. His temples are emerging across the country.

—Shri Rajeshwar Shivacharya, Kattimani Hirematha, Mehakara

During the event, Sateesh Manigere and spouse performed the traditional Padapuja (foot-worship), and thousands of devotees partook of the Holige with ghee. Shivkumar Kalyanarav Swami spoke formally, and the event was presided over by local devotee Basavaraj Mandakanalli. Other attendees included Gundappa Manigere, Basavaraj Managire, Channappa Mustapure, Chandrakant Biradar Navadgi, Jayaraj Dabashetti, Sharadabai Handrale, Vidyavati Manigere, and Kashemma Managire.

Job Seekers' Struggle Committee Stages Protest

RAICHUR

Members of the Job Seekers' Struggle Committee held a protest at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Circle, strongly condemning the Karnataka Congress government for the sudden arrests of job aspirants in Dharwad. They said the government had repeatedly ignored their appeals despite several attempts to highlight their concerns. Joint Secretary Vinod Kumar termed the arrests an attack on democratic rights, pointing out that even after seeking an appointment with the Chief Minister and submitting a memorandum to the Chief Secretary, the administration chose to detain job seekers, creating what he described as a "police-state atmosphere." He accused the government of treating unemployed youth merely as a vote bank and alleged that recruitment delays were being justified through internal reservation issues. Worker leader Veeresh N.S. declared that their movement would continue until all demands were fulfilled. Protesters also sought the release of detained leaders. Hundreds participated.

BJP Leaders Allege Misuse of Sufi Saints' Name for Cong Rally

BIDAR

Conducting a Congress promotional event under the guise of a Sufi saints' gathering, misleading society, is condemnable. Those who exploit religious programs for political gain will face societal consequences. Saints who guide the building of a better society must recognize such political theatrics behind these events and take a stand.

—Somnath Patil, BJP District President

On December 7, a Sufi saints' congregation held in Basavakalyan, which was meant to promote the message of equality, has allegedly sparked caste and religious tensions, BJP district president Somnath Patil and MLAs Dr. Shailendra Beldale and Sharanu Salgar claimed. They accused the Congress of exploiting the names of Sufi saints to organize the rally, misleading society and creating communal disharmony.

Basavakalyan is the sacred land of Mahatma Basavanna, who in the 12th century propagated social revolution and equality. It is a hallowed site that laid the foundation for a caste-free, harmonious society. The BJP leaders condemned the use of a religious event to send a misleading message, stating that such acts disturb social harmony and communal unity. They demanded strict action against those responsible and urged the police to register suo-motu cases against individuals delivering hate speeches.

Focus on Strengthening Cong Cooperative Wing – Dhanraj Talampalli

BIDAR

Efforts will be made to strengthen the Congress Cooperative Wing across the state, said Dhanraj Talampalli, State President of the Congress Cooperative Wing.

Speaking at the executive committee meeting of the district unit of the Congress Cooperative Wing held in Mysuru, he said that new energy is being infused into the wing in all districts, and new office-bearers are being appointed wherever necessary. On this occasion, appointment letters were distributed to the newly elected president, office-bearers of the Mysuru Rural District Unit, and presidents of various taluk units.

Present at the event were Mysuru Rural District Congress President B.J. Vijaykumar, Vice President Manjunath Hedathale, General Secretary Shivaprasad, retired Cooperative Manager Prakash Rao, KPCC Coordinator Manjunath, and others.

Mailapur's Mailaralingeshwara Shrine: Devotion High, Development Low

YADGIR

Mailapur's Mailaralingeshwara temple, managed by the Muzrai Department, is facing severe neglect. Streets are flooded with drainage water, litter surrounds the sacred Honnikere, weeds overgrow pathways, buildings stand incomplete like skeletons, the Kalyana Mantapa is poorly maintained, and open defecation is widespread. Despite earning crores annually from hundi collections, donations, and shop rentals, basic facilities for devotees remain inadequate, and temporary arrangements during annual fairs provide only short-term relief.

With Makara Sankranti Jatra just a month away, thousands of devotees from Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh are expected between January 12–17. Accommodation is scarce; the Kalyana Mantapa and guest rooms are reserved for officials and police, while devotees sleep in fields or open spaces. Lakeside shelters and private lodges cannot meet demand, and half-finished buildings offer no protection from the cold.

SHG FARMERS OUTREACH

Agricultural SHG Loan Distribution

RAICHUR

Women are becoming central to building self-reliant families, and true financial empowerment at the household level can be achieved effectively through women's self-help groups, said Suryamani Saho, Circle Head and Assistant General Manager of Punjab National Bank.

At a large agricultural awareness programme organised at the MARS New Building of the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Raichur—jointly conducted by Punjab National Bank, Jeevan Mitra Samaj Seva Sanstha (JMSSS) and UAS—Vice-Chancellor Dr. M. Hanumanthappa presided over the event and distributed loan sanction letters worth ₹3.20 crore to over 350 members belonging to 32 women's self-help groups.

Addressing the gathering, NABARD DDM Mrs. Kalavathi shared that nearly 9,000 poor families have received financial support through Jeevan Mitra Samaj Seva Sanstha, and expressed satisfaction over the effective utilisation of these schemes.

JMSSS Secretary Nataraj highlighted that the organisation has been training women's self-help groups and joint liability groups for nearly 22 years to support women's journey toward self-reliance. He added that the organisation has successfully acted as a bridge between self-help groups and six nationalised banks, one regional rural bank, and cooperative banks. He proudly noted that JMSSS has maintained zero NPA in SHG bank loans for 22 consecutive years, marking a significant achievement. The organisation continues to work tirelessly to help women and farmers become successful entrepreneurs.

Rajkumar, Head of MSME Foundation, Hyderabad, delivered a session on cybercrimes, highlighting their growing relevance in the digital world.

Other dignitaries present included Dr. U. Satish Kumar, Dean of Student Welfare at UAS; Krishnappa Purushottam, retired RBI official; Dr. Jayaprakash, ADR UAS; Ram Babu Rayala, Senior Manager, PNB; Dr. Timanna, KVK Head Raichur; and Er. Santosh C. Pawar of UAS. The programme opened with a welcome by Ashok, Head of JMSSS, was conducted by Shankarappa Vali, and concluded with a vote of thanks by Madhu Smitha, Manager, Punjab National Bank.

QUICK READ

Link Opens for Medical and Dental Stray Vacancy Round

Bangaluru

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has opened the online link for submitting fresh option entries for the stray vacancy round of medical and dental course admissions. Candidates may enter their preferred choices on the KEA website until 5 PM on December 12, said KEA Executive Director H. Prasanna. Candidates who paid the medical course fees in the third round are eligible to enter options again. Those who were allotted dental seats in the third round may also now submit options for medical seats, he clarified in his statement. The provisional seat allotment results for the stray vacancy round will be published on December 13 at 10 AM.

VTU Extends Internship Application Deadline to Dec 26

Bengaluru

The Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) has extended the last date for students to secure internships in various companies until December 26. Earlier, the deadline had been fixed as December 15 for students pursuing their 7th and 8th semester studies in VTU-affiliated, autonomous, and constituent colleges to apply for internship opportunities. Following appeals from several students who sought additional time to complete the application process, VTU has now officially extended the deadline. This extension aims to ensure that more eligible students can successfully apply and secure internships, the VTU notification stated.

KPTCL Finalises Transparent Hiring of 448 Junior Station Attendants

KPTCL successfully concluded its transparent recruitment process, issuing appointment orders to 448 candidates for technical posts across Karnataka

BENGALURU

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) has completed the recruitment process for Junior Station Attendant and Junior Powerman posts, following a transparent and efficient counseling procedure held on December 10 and 11, 2025, at the KPTCL Officers' Association Building in Bengaluru.

Over the two-day event, 448 candidates received their appointment orders directly from senior officials of the corporation. The counseling program was monitored by the Administration and Human Resources Department, ensuring adherence to procedural integrity throughout the process.

The entire counseling workflow was facilitated through specialized software developed by KPTCL's Information and Technology wing. According to the selection list published on the corporation's website, a total of 491 candidates were shortlisted. Of these, 448 have already been issued appointment orders, while the remaining candidates will receive theirs upon submission and verification of caste validity certificates and reservation documents.

The recruitment drive attracted participants from across Karnataka, including ex-servicemen, hearing-impaired candidates and aspirants from the Kalyana Karnataka region. As stipulated in the employment notification dated October 14, 2024, selection was based on merit determined by 10th standard marks, subject to qualification in the endurance test conducted in May 2025. The process saw overwhelming interest, with more than 70,000 applicants applying statewide.

Speaking on the successful completion of the recruitment, Energy Minister K. J. George said ``as assured by our government, recruitment has been carried out, and the process for appointing Junior Station Attendants and Junior Power Men has been completed swiftly"

Venkatesh Murthy Elected as In-Charge President of Mayaganahalli GP

RAMANAGARA

M. V. Venkatesh Murthy was unanimously elected as in-charge president of Mayaganahalli Gram Panchayat after former chief resigned

M. V. Venkatesh Murthy has been elected as the new in-charge president of Mayaganahalli Gram Panchayat in the taluk. The position had fallen vacant following the resignation of former president Geetha, after which Murthy, who was serving as vice president, was chosen to take charge.

The Gram Panchayat consists of 21 members, and Venkatesh Murthy from Madapur village officially assumed office on Thursday. Congress leaders felicitated him with garlands and celebrated the occasion by distributing sweets.

Addressing the gathering after receiving congratulations, Murthy said that he would prioritise providing essential amenities such as drinking water, roads, and drainage facilities within the Panchayat limits. He expressed gratitude to MLA H. A. Iqbal Hussain, former MLA K. Raju, Taluk Guarantee Implementation Committee president V. H. Raju, and all leaders and party workers for placing their trust in him and supporting his elevation to the post.

Murthy further stated that members of the Panchayat, irrespective of party affiliation, had unanimously supported his selection as in-charge president. He assured that he would work towards the overall development of the Panchayat and fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to him without any political bias.

The event was attended by Panchayat members Rajshekhar M. H., Ranjith, Shobha, Manjamma, Srinivas, Kemparajamma, Bhagya, Dhanalakshmi, B. C. Prakash, Roopa, Siddaraju, Bamul director P. Nagaraju, and leaders including Ramanna, Ramachandrappa, Shivaganganna, Neelamma, Revanna, Dundappa, advocate Srinivas Murthy, Honappa R. Jagadish, Shivakumar Swamy, Suresh Basavanapura, among others.

Filling Vacant Posts in a Phased Manner: CM

BELAGAVI

Vacant government posts will be filled in a phased manner after obtaining approval from the Finance Department, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He was responding today to a starred question raised by Legislative Council member Nirani Hanamant Rudrappa. The member had asked for information regarding the steps taken to quickly fill the approximately 2, 84,881 vacancies in the state, including those in various corporations and boards.

There are a total of 2, 84,881 vacant posts across various government departments in the state. Among these, 1, 01,420 posts are vacant in different corporations and boards, and 14,677 posts are vacant in universities—making a total of 1,88,037 vacancies. Approval has already been received from the Finance Department to initiate recruitment for 24,300 of these posts. Under Article 371(J) for the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, 32,132 posts are yet to be filled. In all, steps have already been taken to fill 56,432 posts, he said.

A portion of the ceiling at Mysuru Palace's Varaha Gate collapsed today, narrowly avoiding a major accident near visitor entry

Major Mishap Averted as Ceiling Collapses at Mysuru Palace Gate

MYSURU

A significant accident was narrowly averted at the world-famous Mysuru Palace today after a portion of the ceiling collapsed near one of its main entry points. The incident occurred at the Varaha Gate, a frequently used entrance by tourists visiting the heritage monument.

According to initial reports, the ceiling of the gate suddenly gave way, causing chunks of cement to fall directly onto a staff member's parked motorcycle. Fortunately, no visitors or staff were present at the spot when the collapse happened, preventing what could have been a serious tragedy.

Palace authorities confirmed that only property damage occurred and no injuries were reported. Staff members immediately inspected the site to assess the structural cause of the collapse.

The Mysuru Palace, a major tourist attraction drawing thousands daily, is currently under routine maintenance, and officials are expected to undertake further safety checks following this incident. More details are awaited as authorities review the situation.

Reservation in recruitment to encourage sportspersons – CM Siddaramaiah

BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah stated that in order to encourage sportspersons, 3% reservation in the Forest Department, 3% in the Police Department, and 2% in various other departments will be implemented.

He was replying today to a starred question raised by Legislative Council member Ivan D'Souza, who had sought information regarding incentives for sportspersons in the state, reservation for sport achievers in government jobs, development of sports infrastructure, and encouragement for the sport of kabaddi.

The Chief Minister informed that the state government has appointed 13 sportspersons who won medals in the Olympics, Paralympics, Commonwealth Games, and Asian Games. In the Police Department, 70 constables have been directly recruited, and 14 PSIs have also been appointed.

He further said that 3% reservation in the Forest Department, 3% in the Police Department, and 2% in various other departments will be implemented to encourage sportspersons. He added that the government will examine the possibility of providing greater encouragement to kabaddi.

Alok Kumar Takes Charge as New DGP of Prisons; Promises Strict Reforms and Improved Security

BENGALURU

Senior IPS officer Alok Kumar (Alok Thakur) on Thursday officially took charge as the new Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services in Bengaluru, marking a key administrative shift in Karnataka's law enforcement leadership.

After assuming office, Alok Kumar stated that his primary focus would be to enforce strict reforms within the state's prison system, strengthen internal discipline and eliminate any irregular practices. He emphasised that the prison department must function with professionalism, transparency, and zero tolerance for misconduct.

The new DGP also highlighted the need to modernise surveillance, improve inmate rehabilitation programmes, and enhance coordination between prison staff and other security agencies.

Alok Kumar, known for his decisive policing style and extensive field experience, said he would prioritise: Tightening security across all correctional facilities. Preventing smuggling of contraband through advanced monitoring. Strengthening intelligence gathering inside prisons. Upgrading training standards for staff. Introducing technology-driven prison management systems

He assured that measures would be taken to curb criminal activities originating from inside prisons, stressing that no inmate will be allowed to misuse the prison environment for external operations.

Kumar's appointment comes at a time when the prison department has been under close scrutiny over issues such as illegal mobile use, drug smuggling, and staff lapses. His strong administrative reputation has raised expectations of swift corrective action.

The newly appointed DGP expressed confidence that with collective effort, Karnataka's prison system could become a model for the country, balancing security with meaningful rehabilitation for inmates.

Cylinder Explosion Reduces Gokarna House to Ashes; Owner Alleges Deliberate Act

GOKARNA

A major fire incident was reported in the early hours of Thursday when a cooking gas cylinder exploded at the residence of Muralidhar Kamath in Banglegudda, Gokarna. The powerful explosion and subsequent blaze completely gutted the house, leaving behind only charred remains of the structure and belongings.

Fortunately, no loss of life was reported as neither Muralidhar nor his family members were present at the time. Muralidhar, a hotelier by profession, runs a small restaurant near Kudle Beach. As part of their routine, the family had stayed overnight at the restaurant. Their absence from home is believed to have prevented a potential tragedy.

However, the incident has raised serious suspicions. Muralidhar claimed that the cylinder was locked and secured, making an accidental explosion unlikely. There was a cylinder lock. How could it have exploded on its own? This was done deliberately by someone, he said, expressing concerns that the fire might have been intentionally set by miscreants when the house was unoccupied.

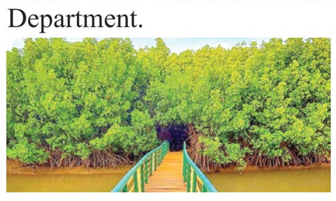
Neighbours reported seeing flames engulfing the house before alerting emergency services. A fire brigade team from Kumta rushed to the spot and worked to bring the fire under control, preventing it from spreading to nearby houses. Despite their swift action, the house was completely destroyed.

Police officials from Gokarna visited the site and have begun an investigation to determine the exact cause of the fire. They are examining whether foul play was involved, as alleged by the owner, or if the incident was the result of a technical malfunction.

Kandla Forest Shields Coastline, Says Kumta ACF Gowda

KUMTA

The Kandla forest, which produces a lot of oxygen, is like a protective shield for the ocean shores. The Aghanashini backwater area, which includes the Kandla ecosystem, has attracted global attention for its unique biodiversity, said Kumta ACF Krishna Gowda. He was speaking at the launch of the Kandla Conservation Campaign held on Wednesday on the banks of the Aghanashini River in Kimani, organized by the Aster DM Foundation, SCODVES and the Forest Department.



PNEUMONIA-PREVENTION-KIDS

Health Officials Stress Pneumonia Prevention for Ensuring a Healthy Childhood

CHITRADURGA

Eliminate pneumonia and ensure a healthy childhood, said District RCH Officer Dr. D. M. Abhinav. He was speaking after releasing the World Pneumonia Day poster during a progress review meeting of health programmes under the National Health Mission, held at the District Health Office hall on Wednesday.

Dr. Abhinav highlighted that pneumonia is a lung infection commonly seen in children under five years of age, with air pollution being a major contributor to respiratory illnesses among them. Fever, loss of appetite, cough, and yellowish sputum are the main symptoms of pneumonia. Lack of proper breastfeeding, malnutrition, poor handwashing facilities, and low birth weight significantly increase the risk, he noted.

To prevent pneumonia, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, providing adequate nutrition, ensuring timely vaccination, and reducing indoor pollution are essential steps. He stressed that seeking medical care within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms can help prevent complications and reduce the spread of infection. Health workers, he added, must raise public awareness and work to reduce child mortality by ensuring that children under five receive free and timely vaccinations.

Speaking on the occasion, Taluk Health Officer Dr. B. V. Girish said that from November 12 to February 28, ASHA workers and frontline health personnel will conduct home visits to identify pneumonia cases at an early stage. They will provide timely treatment, ensure case management, and refer children to higher healthcare centres when advanced treatment is required.

Taluk Health Education Officer B. Moogappa noted that the pneumonia awareness programme, implemented nationwide since 2019, has been effective in improving the health of affected children and reducing under-five mortality through education and awareness initiatives. The meeting was attended by District Health Surveillance Officer Suresh Babu, district government employees' association director and Health Department official Bagesh Ugran, health supervisors, primary health safety officers.

Applications Invited for Financial Assistance to Publish Debut Works

Kannada Book Authority invites debut work applications by December 24, while Navodaya entrance exam scheduled across Chitradurga district

JAWAHAR NAVODAYA Entrance Exam on Dec13

The entrance examination for Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Uduvalli (Hiriyur Taluk) for the academic year 2025–26 will be held on December 13 at 11 AM across designated centres in Chitradurga district. The principal has instructed all students to report on time to their allotted centres with required documents as mentioned in the hall ticket.

CHITRADURGA

The Kannada Book Authority has invited applications for the 2025–26 financial assistance scheme aimed at encouraging young writers to publish their first-ever literary works. The last date to apply is December 24.

Under this scheme, 50 selected young writers will receive a grant of ₹15,000 each for the publication of their manuscripts. Applicants must be between 18 and 40 years of age. They must submit the prescribed application form along with a self-attested copy of their SSLC marks card or authenticated birth certificate.

Additionally, they must provide a self-declaration stating that the submitted manuscript is their debut work and has never been published anywhere. Manuscripts should contain at least 60 pages when DTP formatted in 1/8 demi size. Only creative literary works—stories, novels, poems, plays, essays, and critical articles—will be accepted. Translations, textbooks, and research theses prepared for degrees such as BA, MA, or PhD are not eligible. The Authority has also strictly stated that manuscripts must not contain content that hurts religious, caste, communal, linguistic, or cultural sentiments, nor any material that threatens national unity. Submitted manuscripts will not be returned, and applicants are advised to retain a copy. Applications with DTP manuscripts must reach the Administrative Officer, Kannada Book Authority, Kannada Bhavana, J.C. Road, Bengaluru – 560002 by 5:30 PM on December 24. Forms and further details are available at www.kannadapustakapradhikara.com or via phone at 080-22484516 / 22107704, said Administrative Officer K.B. Kiran Singh.

Chintamani Power Outage Scheduled Dec 14

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The Chintamani 220/66 kV Power Receiving Station will undergo essential maintenance by KPTCL on December 14. As a result, electricity supply will be suspended from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. across a wide range of areas dependent on this station. Chintamani BESCOM Executive Engineer K. Srinath issued an official press note informing residents and consumers about the planned outage and urged them to extend their cooperation.

The shutdown will directly affect supply to several 66/11 kV sub-stations, including Chintamani, Shettimadamangala, Mastenahalli Industrial Area, Thalagavara, Cheemangala, Y-Hunasenahalli, K. Raguttahalli, Bommepalli Cross, Enigadale, Shidlaghatta, Melur, Nandiganahalli, G. Kodihalli, Iragampalli, M. Gollahalli, Ganjigunte, Burudugunte, Pallirlu and Dibburahalli. All these stations depend on the Chintamani receiving centre for power distribution. Due to this interruption, both Chintamani and Shidlaghatta towns, along with their surrounding villages and rural regions, will experience a complete electricity shutdown during the maintenance hours. The outage is expected to impact households, commercial establishments, small industries, agricultural pump sets and various public services that rely on uninterrupted power. Officials clarified that the maintenance activity is crucial to ensure long-term electrical stability, prevent unexpected breakdowns and enhance the quality of power supplied to consumers.

District Administration Urges Farmers to Register Promptly for Maize Procurement

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The registration process for maize procurement has begun across the district, and Deputy Commissioner P.N. Ravindra has urged farmers to register in large numbers without delay. He requested that maize-growing farmers visit the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) camps operating at milk union centres in every taluk and complete their registration at the earliest.

Chairing the District Task Force Committee meeting on maize procurement at the district administration building on Thursday, the Deputy Commissioner said that maize has been cultivated on 54,497 hectares this year, yielding an estimated 16,34,910 quintals. While a portion of the produce has already been sold, around 14,82,420 quintals remain with farmers. To support farmers, KMF has initiated the purchase of 10,000 metric tonnes of maize from farmers of Bengaluru Rural, Kolar, and Chikkaballapur districts through its Rajanukunte feed manufacturing unit.

Farmers from Chikkaballapur can register at the milk union camps to participate in this procurement. As of now, 155 farmers from the district have enrolled, and the Deputy Commissioner encouraged many more to register and benefit by selling maize at ₹2,400 per quintal.

Along with KMF's procurement process, authorities have been instructed to prepare for maize purchase under the 2025–26 Minimum Support Price (MSP) Scheme.

Under this scheme, the Karnataka State Cooperative Marketing Federation has been designated as the nodal agency to purchase maize from farmers. Based on land records available on the FRUITS portal, each farmer can sell up to 50 quintals, calculated at 12 quintals per acre, at the MSP rate of ₹2,400 per quintal.

MSMEs Urged to Register on TReDS

BENGALURU RURAL

Delayed payments remain a major challenge for small and medium-scale industries, often affecting their day-to-day operations. To overcome this, MSME entrepreneurs should register on the TReDS (Trade Receivable Discounting System) digital platform, said H.R. Govindaraju, President of the Sir M. Visvesvaraya Industrial Association. He was speaking after inaugurating a one-day awareness workshop on the TReDS scheme under the Government of India's RAMP programme. The event was organised jointly by the Department of Industries and Commerce, KCTU Bengaluru, District Industries Centre (DIC) Chikkaballapur, and TECSOK Bengaluru at Chamavi Party Hall in the city.

Highlighting the importance of timely cash flow for MSMEs, Govindaraju noted that TReDS provides an efficient online mechanism for entrepreneurs to get their receivables discounted through banks and financial institutions. This enables industries to access immediate liquidity, preventing operational hurdles caused by delayed payments. He encouraged entrepreneurs across the district to make full use of such government-supported digital platforms. Joint Director of the District Industries Centre, K. Shivalingiah, addressed the participants and explained various opportunities available under the Central Government's RAMP initiative as well as state-level schemes aimed at supporting new and existing industries.

REVENUE COMMISSIONERATE, REVENUE DEPARTMENT
BHOOMI MONITORING CELL
1st floor SSLR Building, K.R. Circle, Bengaluru-560001.
E-mail: bhoomi.bmc01@gmail.com Phone: 080-22113255

No: BMC/2025-26/IND0021 Date: 11/12/2025

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tender is invited for procurement of **240 Scanners** to Bhoomi Kendra under Bhoomi Project. The last date for uploading filled tender forms in K.P.P Portal is **29-12-2025 by 5.30 P.M.**

Details regarding terms and conditions are available at **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Assistant Commissioner,
Bhoomi Monitoring Cell, Revenue Department.

DIPR/CP/SPAN/4386/2025-26

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

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Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Chamarajanagar District, Chamarajanagar. Phone No:08226-223170, fax: 08226-223180, e-mail:deo.cnagar@gmail.com

ಸಂ: ಎ.ಪಿ.ಟಿ(1):ಪಿಆರ್:27/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10.12.2025

ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕಂದಾಯ ಕಛೇರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಡುವ 16 ಅಟಲ್‌ಜೀ ಜನಸ್ನೇಹಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಿಗೆ ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕವಾಗಿ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಗಳನ್ನು ನೇಮಕ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು, ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ನಿಯಮ 2000 ಹಾಗೂ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ ನಿಯಮ 2001ಕ್ಕೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ (ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: **RD/2025-26/SE0487**)ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಗಿಟ್ಟ ಒಟ್ಟು ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.122.26 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.1,83,394/–ಗಳು, ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯುಳ್ಳ ಸರಬರಾಜುದಾರರು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಂಡು ನಂತರ ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿ ನಿಯಮಾನುಸಾರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನ್ನು ಆನ್ ಲೈನ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಠಡಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:106 ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ, 1ನೇ ಮಹಡಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಡಳಿತ ಭವನ, ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿ,
ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ

ಸಂ. ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ.ಚಾ.ನಗರ/552/2025-26

MANDYA URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BANNUR ROAD, BY THE SIDE OF PUMP HOUSE
MANDYA 571401, Office: 08232-222196
Websiite:WWW.Mandya.uda.gov.in,
Email: Commissionermuda@gmail.com
No. MUDA/Tech/CA Site/01/2025-26
Date: 10-12-2025

CA SITE NOTIFICAION

Applications are invited for allotment of sites reserved for Civic Amentiy which are remaining after allotment in Vivekananda Nagar, Sathanuru Layout and other Private Residential Layouts formed by Mandya Urban Development Authority, to Central, State Govt. Offices, Boards, Corporations, Educational Institutions. Organisation for welfare of Differently Abled and Old Age Homes. As per the Government Order First Priority will be given to Central, State Govt. Offices, Boards, Corporations, Educational Institutions (only Kannada Medium), Organisation for welfare of Differently Abled and Old Age Homes and will be allotted at 50% of market rate. For other organizations and Educational Institutions allotment will be made as per market rate fixed by the Government. For Organisations belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes allotment will be made on basis of reservation as per Government Rules. Applications are invited in prescribed form for allotment as per Karnataka Urband Development Authorities Civic Amenity Site Allotment Rules 1991 of To allot land on lease agreement of 30 years, It is requested to submit applications with relevant documents to the Authority within 5.30 PM on 09-01-2026. Applications received later will not be considered Further details of site locations, measurement etc. can be obtained from the office of Mandya Urban Development Authority

Sd/-Chairman,
Urban Development Authority,
Mandya

Sd/-Commissioner,
Urban Development Authority,
Mandya

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ–ಮಂ/ಕೆಎಸ್.ಎಂಸಿ&ಎ/637/2025–26

AFFIDAVIT

I, **SALAUDDIN** S/o Nazeer Aged about 43 years. R/at Budikere, Degulamata Road, Kanakapura Town, Kanakapura, old Ramanagara (Ds) New Bangalore South district-562117, do hereby solemnly affirm, I state that my name is entered as **SALAUDDIN** in his Aadhaar Card (4825 7365 1905), I state that my name is entered as **SALAUDDIN NAZEER SAAB** in his passport issued by the Republic of India bearing No. E 2373615, And I finally declare that my name is **SALAUDDIN**. vide affidavit Date: 11-12-2025 sworn before Notary and Advocate Kantharaju.S, at Kanakapura.

AFFIDAVIT

I, **Smt Arun kumari G.R. @ Anitha G.R.** D/o Sri Gopalappa.R Aged about 33 years, residing at No.63, Jinke Bachahalli village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural district, do hereby solemnly affirm, I state that I am residing in the above mentioned address, I was born **on : 04.01.1992** and named as **Anitha G.R.** I studied my primary education at Govt. Higher primary school, Kallubalu village, Anekal taluk, now I am intending to change my name as **Arun kumari G.R** instead of **Anitha G.R** in all future records. my name as **Arun kumari G.R** instead of **Anitha G.R** in all public records and personal records and to produce this affidavit **Dated : 25.11.2025,** sworn before that Advocate and Notary **Prakasha. C** BAL., LLB., at Doddaballapura.

Government of Karnataka
SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT
Office Of The Joint Director, Mysuru District, Mysuru
Dr. Babu Jagajeevanaram Bhavan, Adhipampa Road, Narayanaswamy Block, Paduvarahalli East Layout, Myosre-12
Telephone : 0821-2344661 E-mail: dswomysore9@gmail.com

No/JD/SWD/IA/CR :55/2025-26 Date: 10.12.2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Joint Director Social Welfare, Mysuru Dist here by invites Technical & Financial Bids from officially registered, eligible suppliers, Non-governmental organization who are registered under law, co-operative societies who are registered under society act to Supply food materials for all institutions spread over Mysuru District as described in the schedule of requirements.

1	Supply of Food materials to Social Welfare Department hostels an estimated cost of Rs 35.27.58.078.00	Two years

Interested eligible Registered in e-procurement portal bidders can down load the bid documents with visiting the website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Last date & Time for submission of Tender **DATE. 24.12.2025 @ 5.30PM**

Sd/- Joint Director
Social Welfare Department, Mysuru

DIPR/MYSORE/1354/SSC/2025-26

Office of Assistant Conservator of Forests
Ramanagara Sub-Division, Ramanagara

No. ACF/RSD/Tender/CR-04/2025-26 Date: 10.12.2025

E-Tender Notification
(Through e-procurement Portal Only)

Tender Notice "This is an information to the public, that during the year 2025-26, the construction of Railway barricade at Kanakapura Range. Ramanagara Division by purchasing used rails. P.W.D CLASS-I, CLASS-II contractors are eligible to carry out the works. The E-tender has been invitied through the Karnataka Procurement Portal as per the transparent rules. the tenderer can participate **25.12.2025 till 4.00 PM.** The technical bid will be Opening on: **26.12.2025 at 04:30 PM.** and the financial bid will be opened on **31.12.2025 at 04:00 PM.** In case if no tenderer has been participated in the first tender, the second tender continous till **07.01.2025 at 04:00 PM.** (No separate tender notice will be issued in this regard) The technical bid of the said tender will be opened on **08.01.2026 at 04:30 PM** and the financial bid will be opened on **13.01.2026 at 04:00 PM**. Interested parties can place their tenders as per the terms and conditions of the tender. If any other information is required, visit the website. **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Assistant Conservator of Forests
Ramanagara Sub-Division
Ramanagara

DIPR/BSD/489/SA/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
M.I & G.W.D.D. DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR

No.EE/MID/VJP/AE-3/4702/TND/2025-26/3374 Date: 10.12.2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department, Division Vijaypur invites work tenders through "E-Procurement" from eligible contractor on item rate Tender for following works as per KTPP Act-2000 and latest amendments.

4702 Major Works :- 1) Construction of 33KV sub station of Chikkalaki LIS in Jamakhandi Taluka of Bagalkot District, **Amount put to Tender Rs.370.50 Lakhs**, EMD **Rs.5,56,000-00, Tender Period for the above work is Eleven(11) Months including monsoon.**

Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka E-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home under login for Contractors from **11.12.2025.** Tenders may be submitted on electronically in E-Procurement portal up to **17-30 hrs.** on **20.12.2025.** Interested contractors information regarding works may be obtained from this office or e-Procurement helpdesk (Ph.No.080-25501216 & 080-25501227) upto **17-30 hrs.** on **19.12.2025.** Pre-bid meeting will be held on **17.12.2025** for work costing above 1.00Crore in the office of the Executive Engineer, MI&GWDD Division, Vijaypur. Tenders shall be quoted without adding GST and other details can be seen in the tender documents.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
MI & GWDD Division, Vijaypur

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/530/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

KALABURAGI MAHANAGARA PALIKE, KALABURAGI
Fax No.08472/260776, Phone: 08472/ 278675, Email Id: itstaff_ulb_gulbarga@yahoo.com

No.KMP/HS/TENDER/2025-26 DATE:10.12.2025

KPPP TENDER NOTIFICATION

Under the Karnataka Public Procurement Transparency Rules 2000, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Corporation invites tenders from eligible bidders for the work mentioned below. Tenders are invited through e-procurement for the following services

Sl. No	Name of Work	Indent Numbers	Estimate Amount	EMD Amount (In. Rs.)	Tender Last Date and Technical Bid opening Date
1	Providing end-to-end services for the collection, segregation, Transportation and processing of bulk waste generated by bulk waste generators within Kalaburagi City, at the bidders designated location for **Zone-1**	DMA/2025-26/SE6853	**49,07,425/-**	98,148/-	• Last Date and Time for Queries Date **:19.12.2025, Timing : 05.00 PM** • Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders Date: **26.12.2025, Timing:04.30PM** • Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bid Date: **27.12.2025, Timing : 05.30PM** • Date and Time for Opening of Financial Bid Date: **29.12.2025, Timing : 11.00AM**
2	Providing end-to-end services for the collection, segregation, Transportation and processing of bulk waste generated by bulk waste generators within Kalaburagi City, at the bidders designated location for **Zone-2**	DMA/2025-26/SE6854	**27,32,390/-**	54,647/-	
3	Providing end-to-end services for the collection, segregation, Transportation and processing of bulk waste generated by bulk waste generators within Kalaburagi City, at the bidders designated location for **Zone-3**	DMA/2025-26/SE6855	**33,98,880/-**	67,977/-	

Sl. No	Name of Work	Indent Numbers	Estimate Amount	EMD Amount (In. Rs.)	Tender Last Date and Technical Bid opening Date
1	Dry Waste Collection Center-2025	DMA/2025-26/SE6864	**22.20 Lakh**	5,500/-	• Last Date and Time for Queries Date :**26.12.2025, Timing :04.30 PM** • Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders Date:27.12.2025, Timing:05.00PM • Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bid Date:29.12.2025, Timing : 11.30AM • Date and Time for Opening of Financial Bid Date:31.12.2025, Timing : 12.00AM
2	Hire Tractor Tender	DMA/2025-26/SE6863	**1.92. Cr.**	2,88,642/-	

• For more details about EMD is availed in KPPP portal. • For more information Contact Assistant Executive Engineer (Env), Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi • Wed Site : **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home.**

Sd/- Assistant Executive Engineer (Env)
City Corporation Kalaburagi

DIPR/Kalaburagi/849/KSMC&A/2025-26

QUICK READ

Nadda accuses Nath, Siddaramaiah of sidelining Vande Mataram

New Delhi
Leader of House in the Rajya Sabha, J.P. Nadda, on Thursday sharpened his attack on the Congress, accusing its leaders of repeatedly undermining Vande Mataram. In a pointed intervention during the debate on national symbols, Nadda alleged that former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath had deleted Vande Mataram from official practice on the first working day of every month, and claimed that Siddaramaiah in Karnataka asked Congress members not to sing Vande Mataram on Constitution Day. Nadda's remarks came against the backdrop of a wider discussion on the historical and cultural significance of the song.

BJD forms seven-member fact-finding team to assess ground situation

Bhubaneswar
Following directions of BJD President Naveen Patnaik, the party on Thursday formed a seven-member fact-finding team to assess the current situation in Malkangiri district, where large-scale violence was reported after the body of a 51-year-old tribal woman was found. The team comprises Manas Madkami (to coordinate), Manohar Randhari, MLA, Ramesh Majhi, ex-Minister, Pradeep Majhi, ex-MP, Rabi Nanda, ex-Minister, Ishwar Panigrahi, and Laxmipriya Nayak, MLA Candidate, Chitrakonda. The team has been entrusted with the responsibility of visiting the affected areas, assessing the ground situation, and submitting a detailed report to the Party President.

Ajay Gupta, partner of Luthra brothers, sent to seven-day custody

Panaji
Delhi-based businessman Ajay Gupta, one of the co-owners of the fire-devastated 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub in Goa, has now been sent to seven days of police custody for further investigation. Advocate Rohan Dessai, representing Gupta, said: Ajay Gupta is fully cooperating with the investigation. The Goa Police had sought 10 days of custody, but the court granted seven days. The investigation is ongoing, so at this stage, I cannot comment on his role. The Goa Police arrested Gupta, a sleeping partner of club owners Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra.

RS Chairman Radhakrishnan warns on election debate limits

New Delhi
Ahead of a scheduled discussion in the Rajya Sabha, Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan reminded members of the constitutional and procedural boundaries governing parliamentary debate, particularly when it touches upon institutions of high authority. He underscored that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is an autonomous constitutional body under Article 324 of the Constitution, and its day-to-day functioning does not fall under the direct purview of the Government of India. Chairman Radhakrishnan referred to Rule 238 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States.

Ethanol-Blended Petrol Saved Over ₹1.40 Lakh Cr in Forex, Says Gadkari

Gadkari told Lok Sabha ethanol-blended petrol reduced fuel imports, boosted farmer income and showed no negative vehicle impact.

NEW DELHI

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday that the use of ethanol-blended petrol has enabled the country to save more than ₹1.40 lakh crore in foreign exchange while simultaneously offering significant benefits to farmers.

Addressing concerns raised by several members, Gadkari said that extensive testing has revealed no negative impact on vehicles using ethanol-blended fuel. He emphasised that the rollout of E20 petrol is a major step towards a cleaner and greener

future, highlighting that ethanol-blended petrol helps reduce pollution and lowers India's reliance on expensive crude oil imports.

The minister also noted that farmers have earned nearly ₹40,000 crore by supplying raw materials such as sugarcane and maize used in ethanol production. This, he said, has strengthened rural income and encouraged sustainable agricultural practices.

Responding to questions about vehicle compatibility with E10 and E20 fuel standards, Gadkari outlined the government's policy framework. He said vehicle manufacturers must declare whether a particular model is compatible with E20 fuel, and this information must be displayed clearly on the vehicle through a visible sticker.

Gadkari further clarified that vehicles sold before April 1, 2023, are compatible with E10 fuel, whereas those sold after this date have been manufactured using materials compliant with E20 standards. Safety guidelines for E20 fuel have been formulated through BIS specifications and Automotive Industry Standards, ensuring that drivability, startability and compatibility of metal and plastic components remain unaffected.

The minister assured the House that no phase-out or modification of older, non-E20-compliant vehicles is necessary. Citing a study conducted by ARAI, IOCL and SIAM, he said normal wear and tear from using ethanol-blended fuel can be effectively managed through routine servicing and that no special retrofitting programme is required.

KIIFB Moves High Court to Quash ED Notice on Masala Bond Usage

KIIFB approached High Court seeking suspension of ED proceedings over alleged Masala Bond misuse amid sharp legal and political dispute.

KOCHI

The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) on Thursday approached the High Court seeking to quash the Enforcement Directorate's adjudication notice issued in relation to alleged violations in its 2019 Masala Bond transaction. After hearing initial arguments, the court posted the matter for further consideration on Tuesday, when it will examine the request for an interim stay.

In its petition, KIIFB urged the court to suspend all proceedings arising from the ED's notice until a final decision is reached. The notice stems from the agency's objection that KIIFB diverted Masala Bond funds for real estate purchases an allegation the state financing body strongly disputes.

KIIFB argued that the funds raised were strictly deployed for state development projects, including land acquisition required for infrastructure expansion. It contended that such land purchases did not constitute real estate activity, as claimed by the ED.

The Enforcement Directorate, however, maintains that funds raised via Masala Bonds must be used only for projects constructed on land already owned by the government or land acquired through non-bond resources. According to submissions made by the Additional Solicitor General, using bond proceeds for any form of land purchase even for government infrastructure violates the usage restrictions governing internationally raised funds.

The ED alleges that KIIFB used ₹467 crore of the ₹2,672 crore raised through the Masala Bond to acquire land, thereby breaching provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). In addition to KIIFB, notices have also been issued to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, former Finance Minister Thomas Isaac and several senior officials involved in the bond mobilisation exercise. The adjudication process follows the ED's earlier report claiming that the Masala Bond fundraising involved procedural violations under FEMA.

Tej Pratap Yadav's JJD begins new membership campaign Friday, signalling deeper political separation from RJD and Lalu–Tejashwi leadership.

Tej Pratap Yadav's JJD to Launch Major Membership Drive Amid Growing Family Rift

PATNA

Former minister Tej Pratap Yadav's Janshakti Janata Dal (JJD) will launch a large-scale membership drive from Friday as part of an ambitious plan to expand the party's organisational base. Tej Pratap, who served twice as a minister in Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's government, is preparing for a significant restructuring and consolidation effort aimed at strengthening the JJD ahead of future elections.

The mega membership drive for the 2025–28 period will be launched at 1 p.m. from his official residence at 26 M Stand Road. Announcing the initiative on social media, Tej Pratap described it as more than a political programme—calling it an ideological movement and an expansion of the family.

The move is expected to add fresh turbulence to Bihar's already volatile political landscape. Tej Pratap has been firm about carving out an identity independent of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and distancing himself from the Lalu–Tejashwi camp. The RJD's traditional support base, built on Lalu Prasad Yadav's social engineering and

loyal voter groups, may face new challenges as Tej Pratap attempts to position himself as a standalone political force.

With strong visibility, a distinct public persona and considerable social media influence, Tej Pratap has the potential to make inroads into the RJD's core voter blocs. The 2025 Assembly elections had already exposed the widening rift between the Yadav brothers, with both fielding competing candidates and campaigning in rival constituencies.

What began as an internal family dispute has now formally escalated into a full-fledged political confrontation. Tej Pratap's repeated declaration that he would rather die than return to the RJD underscores the irreparable nature of the divide and indicates that any possibility of reconciliation is effectively off the table.

'They received votes when ballot boxes were looted': BJP's Sudhanshu Trivedi attacks Cong

NEW DELHI

BJP MP Dr Sudhanshu Trivedi described India as the world's only vibrant living democracy in the vast stretch from Eastern Europe to Japan. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha during a debate on election reforms, Trivedi said that while Australia and Japan also qualify as democracies, India stands apart for the depth and vitality of its democratic practice.

To underline his point, Trivedi cited a Freedom House report which, he claimed, demonstrated a historical link between Hinduism and democratic traditions.

He argued that India's civilisational ethos had nurtured democratic values long before modern institutions took shape. Tracing the history of electoral contests, Trivedi recalled that the first election petition was filed by Dr B.R. Ambedkar after losing in his constituency. He said Jawaharlal Nehru had written to Lord Mountbatten acknowledging the Congress victory in Bombay and reportedly remarked that Ambedkar was joining hands with Hindu communists.

The BJP MP went on to highlight lapses in electoral processes across decades, pointing to the Emergency era when Indira Gandhi's election victory was challenged in court. He noted that electronic voting machines (EVMs) were introduced during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, marking a technological shift in India's electoral system.

Trivedi argued that the Congress era of dominance ended once safeguards such as CCTV monitoring, voter ID cards, independent media, an independent judiciary, and rising literacy levels were established. They received votes when ballot boxes were looted, booths were captured, bullets flew, and people died, he said, adding emphatically, That era will not come back.

Lack of level playing field for parties in elections, says Ajay Maken in RS

NEW DELHI

Congress MP Ajay Maken delivered a pointed speech in the Rajya Sabha, questioning whether India truly lives up to its claim of being the mother of democracy. He argued that recent developments provide loud evidence that democracy may not be alive in practice, and outlined three essential elements of a democratic process -- a level playing field, transparency, and credibility.

On the first point, Maken drew from his experience as Treasurer of the Congress party. He said he had examined the accounts of his party and those of other political parties after elections, and found glaring disparities. According to him, the amounts in rival parties' bank accounts shot up after 2014, raising questions about fairness.

How is this a level playing field? he asked.

He further alleged that Congress bank accounts were frozen ahead of the 2024 general election and only unfrozen after the results were declared, undermining the principle of equal opportunity.

Turning to transparency, Maken flagged inconsistencies in voter turnout figures in Haryana, which he said varied across announcements by the Election Commission.

He also criticised amendments that prevented access to CCTV footage of polling booths, arguing that such restrictions eroded public trust.

If nothing wrong is being done, why is immunity being given to election officials? he asked.

On credibility, Maken questioned the application of the model code of conduct. He said opposition promises of payouts to women were branded as bribes, while similar measures by the ruling party were not treated the same way.

Such double standards, he argued, weaken the credibility of the electoral process. Concluding his remarks, Maken warned that changing laws cannot silence public sentiment. You can change the laws, but you can't repress the voice of the people, he declared, urging the House to reflect on whether India's democratic institutions are functioning as intended.

Odisha constitutes special court to fast-track trial of cases against Maoist leader Azad

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Home Department has constituted a special court for the speedy trial of more than 35 cases pending against jailed Maoist leader Dunna Kesava Rao, alias Azad. Maoist leader Azad, who surrendered to the Andhra Pradesh police on May 18, 2011, has been in Odisha jail since June 1, 2011.

Now, therefore in compliance of the order of Supreme Court and High Court of Orissa, the State Government in consultation with the High Court of Orissa, do hereby establish court of Additional District and Session Judge at Paralakhemundi in addition to the existing number of such courts in the judgeship of Gajapati with effect from the date the said court functions with the local limits of jurisdiction in the entire state of Odisha and fix the place of sitting of the said court at Paralakhemundi for speedy trial of cases pending against D.Kesava Rao, reads the order of Home Department.

The special court, however, will not hear the case registered against Azad under the POCSO Act, 2012, at Rayagada.

Notably, Azad faces 37 pending criminal cases in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. He was the prime accused in the 2008 killing of VHP leader Swami Laxmananda Saraswati, which sparked communal violence in Kandhamal that left 39 people dead and thousands of homes destroyed.

He is also charged in the 2008 Nayagarh police armoury attack, which killed 14 people, including 13 police personnel, and in the 2006 R. Udaygiri jail attack. Another murder case against him is registered at the Tumudibandha police station in Kandhamal.

BJP AMIT SHAH

BJP Rallies Behind Amit Shah After Fierce Lok Sabha Clash Over Electoral Reforms

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday firmly backed Union Home Minister Amit Shah after he launched a scathing attack on the Congress and other opposition parties in the Lok Sabha, accusing them of spreading misinformation about the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and attempting to malign India's democratic processes. Shah asserted that the Narendra Modi government will not allow infiltrators to get voting rights, triggering an intense exchange with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

Outside Parliament, Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal defended Shah's statements, saying the Home Minister had responded comprehensively to every point raised by the opposition during the debate on electoral reforms. He responded to every point raised by the opposition, but they did not listen to his answers in full, Meghwal remarked.

Union Minister Virendra Kumar also expressed support, stating, What he said to safeguard the future of the coming generations is absolutely correct.

Several BJP MPs echoed these sentiments. Praveen Khandelwal said, The Congress' narrative was completely exposed. Amit Shah laid out historical facts and dismantled their claims. The conspiracy woven by Congress and other opposition parties was fully unmasked in the House yesterday.

BJP MP Samik Bhattacharya reiterated long-standing party concerns over demographic changes in border regions. The BJP has long warned that a silent demographic shift is underway. In West Bengal, especially in border districts like Darjeeling and North Bengal, demographics are changing because of the influx of Rohingya and Bangladeshi immigrants, he said.

Dinesh Sharma, another BJP MP, added that Shah had effectively countered what he described as false claims and propaganda spread by the Congress. They had no reply, he asserted.

The Congress, however, sharply criticised the Home Minister's conduct. Congress MP Sukhdeo Bhagat said that while Amit Shah holds a respected office, his demeanour in the House fell short of parliamentary expectations.

QUICK READ

Cable landing station to be set up in Gujarat's Dhuvaran

Ahmedabad

The Gujarat government has taken a major step toward strengthening its digital and data infrastructure with the signing of a memorandum of understanding to set up a cable landing station (CLS) project in Dhuvaran village of Anand district, government officials said on Thursday. The agreement was formalised at Gandhinagar's Mahatma Mandir in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi during the Regional AI Impact Conference. The MoU was signed between the Gujarat government, Gujarat International Finance Tec-City and Sharjah-based Henox IT and Data Centers Private Limited.

NIA arrests 5 accused in 2019 Ramalingam murder case

New Delhi

In another breakthrough in the 2019 Ramalingam murder case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two absconding proclaimed offenders and three more harbourers of the assailants involved in the brutal killing, the agency said on Thursday. Ramalingam was hacked to death in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, on 5th February 2019, allegedly by members of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI). Natives of Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, Mohamed Burhanudeen and Mohamed Nabil Hasan, were POs on the run for the past nearly seven years.

J&K L-G gives job appointment letters to 41 kin of terror victims

Jammu

J&K Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha, said on Thursday that for long the victims of terrorism were left to struggle in silence as he handed over 41 job appointment letters to next of kin of terror victims. Appointment letters were also handed over to 22 beneficiaries in Age relaxation cases and 19 wards of J&K Police martyrs under Compassionate Appointment Rules SRO-43 and Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (RAS). Earlier, on July 28, 2025, the Lieutenant Governor had handed over the appointment letters to 94 Next of Kin (NoKs) of terror victims from the Jammu division.

Manoj Tiwari Hails Modi Govt's Women-Centric Reforms, Slams Opposition's Hidden Mentality

Manoj Tiwari defended Modi government's women empowerment efforts while criticising Opposition walkout and alleged indifference toward social reforms.

NEW DELHI

In a forceful press conference at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters on Thursday, Lok Sabha MP Manoj Tiwari delivered a spirited defence of the Narendra Modi government's decade-long achievements in women's empowerment, even as he launched a scathing critique of the Opposition's approach to key social issues.

The North-east Delhi MP, known equally for his political presence and his earlier career as a Bhojpuri singer, addressed a hall packed with journalists. Seamlessly blending personal anecdotes with data-driven arguments, Tiwari sought to highlight what he described as a historic transformation in India's gender landscape.

I'm raising an important topic, he began, before accusing the Opposition of harbouring a hidden mentality that, according to him, prevents meaningful progress. Drawing a direct parallel to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Tiwari alleged that the Opposition walked out when the issue of taking action against infiltrators came up, referring to recent disruptions in Parliament.

Tiwari evoked a stark emotional contrast while describing the shift in societal attitudes toward the birth of daughters. When daughters were born in this country, people considered it a crisis; the era of female infanticide had begun, he recalled sombrely. Today, when daughters are born, celebrations are held, and I am also a part of it. Today, we are celebrating with great fanfare.

He credited the Modi-led government for enabling this cultural transformation, questioning whether similar efforts were ever prioritised under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Did the UPA government ever pay any attention to this? he asked. It is the government's job to remove the superstitions of society.

Tiwari highlighted the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam the Women's Reservation Bill as a landmark accomplishment that symbolises the empowerment of women across the country.

Woman teacher attacked by husband in Kerala school

KOTTAYAM

In a shocking incident, a woman teacher was allegedly attacked inside her school on Thursday by her husband, triggering panic among staff and students. The incident took place at Poovathumoodu School in Ettumanoor around 10.30 a.m., when the accused, identified as Kochumon, entered the campus and assaulted his wife Doniya, a teacher at the school. According to school authorities, the attack occurred inside the headmistress' room.

Kochumon allegedly used a sharp object to stab Doniya on her neck after asking to meet her. The teacher, who sustained injuries, was immediately shifted to the hospital. Initial reports said her injuries are not life-threatening. School staff said the assault appears to be linked to family issues. Earlier in the day, around 9.30 a.m., Kochumon had visited the school and enquired about his wife.

The headmistress informed him that Doniya had not yet arrived. He left the premises but returned about an hour later. When he came back at 10.30 a.m., the headmistress told him that Doniya was in class teaching. Kochumon claimed he had come to give her a book and insisted on meeting her. Believing the request to be harmless, the headmistress summoned the teacher to her office.

It was at this point, staff said, that the assault took place. Hearing Doniya's screams, other teachers rushed to the room. By the time they reached, Kochumon had fled the school. Staff members said the entire incident unfolded within minutes, leaving the school community stunned. Police have launched an investigation and are searching for the accused.

Eligible farmers to benefit from agricultural schemes: Maha Minister

NAGPUR

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Dattatray Bharne on Thursday assured the Legislative Council that no eligible farmer in the state would be deprived of the benefits of the agricultural schemes implemented by the state government, underscoring the government's sensitivity towards the farming community. Minister Bharane was responding to a question raised by Member Ranjitsinh Mohite Patil regarding the pending funds and subsidies for various farmer schemes in the state.

Minister Bharane stated that the government has always stood firmly behind farmers during times of crisis and will continue to do so. He assured the House that the necessary funds for agricultural schemes will be made available by March.

He elaborated that the Agriculture Department verifies the documents and confirms the eligibility of applicants under various schemes before granting benefits as per the scheme criteria.

Minister Bharane announced the disbursement of significant funds for various schemes for the financial year 2025-2026.

Under the Centrally sponsored sub Mission on agricultural mechanisation, Rs 82.67 have been disbursed, Rs 200 crore under state sponsored agricultural mechanisation, Rs 251.41 crore under Prime Minister's National Agricultural Development scheme, Rs 100 crore under Mukhyamantri Shashwat Krishi Sinchan Yojana, Rs 62.70 crore under Bhausaheb Fundkar Fruit Orchard Planting scheme, Rs 31.97 crore under Mukhyamantri Krishi & Anna Prakriya Yojana and Rs 68.33 crore under integrated horticulture development scheme.

Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel Unveils Major AI Initiatives at Regional AI Impact Conference

AHMEDABAD

CM Bhupendra Patel launched Gujarat's new AI governance tools and digital infrastructure, highlighting AI's role in citizen welfare and development.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel inaugurated the Regional AI Impact Conference at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, declaring that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary leadership, Artificial Intelligence has transformed from a technological tool into a national mission powering India's progress. Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi and Science and Technology Minister Arjun Modhwadia were also present at the event.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said AI is significantly strengthening citizen welfare, boosting transparency, and accelerating Gujarat's journey toward becoming a future-ready state. He announced the operational launch of the Gujarat Unified Digital Stack — a comprehensive platform designed to make digital governance smarter, faster and more citizen-centric. With unified data-sharing across government departments, citizens will be able to access all services through a single platform, while real-time analytics will help improve the effectiveness of government schemes.

As part of the event, CM Patel unveiled the Gujarat AI Stack, a suite of six plug-and-play artificial intelligence tools aimed at enhancing governance efficiency. The tools include Agriculture AI, scheme eligibility checks, a procurement chatbot, a grievance classifier, a document extractor and chat management solutions.

In addition, the Gujarat Cloud Adoption Guidelines 2025 were released to strengthen digital governance infrastructure, ensuring improved security, scalability and AI-readiness. The guidelines will enable easier access to MeitY-empanelled cloud services and national GPU compute resources.

The state government also signed two major Memorandums of Understanding — one with Google and another with Bhashini — focused on developing multilingual AI systems, Gujarati-language models and digital public services.

Further bolstering its digital ecosystem, Gujarat will soon see GIFT City and Henox jointly establish a Cable Landing Station, enhancing global digital connectivity and supporting the growth of green data centres in the state.

CM Nitish Kumar inspected Kesariya tourist centre, health services and welfare institutions, urging officials to enhance facilities.

Nitish Kumar reviews tourist, health and welfare facilities in Champaran

PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday conducted an extensive review of development works in East Champaran, beginning with an inspection of the under-construction Tourist Facility Centre at Kesariya. He examined the auditorium and various amenities being created at the site and instructed officials to speed up the project. Kumar noted that the Kesariya Buddhist Stupa draws a significant number of domestic and international visitors, and the new facility will enhance the tourism experience while showcasing Bihar's rich Buddhist heritage.

One of the key attractions of the upcoming centre is a 5D theatre with a seating capacity of 48, designed to present visual content on important Buddhist teachings. The facility will also include a Bihar Pavilion displaying educational exhibits and curated frames depicting the state's historical and cultural legacy. More than 90 sculptures will be showcased in dedicated display boxes, complemented by artistic installations placed across the open areas. Additionally, eight replicas of major Buddhist monuments of Bihar will be installed at the four corners of the complex.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the ongoing conservation and development works at the Kesariya Buddhist Stupa complex. He directed officials to maintain strict safety standards and ensure proper upkeep of visitor facilities.

During his visit, Nitish Kumar inspected the Health and Wellness Centre at Tajpur village, where he reviewed medical services and interacted with the attending doctor. He assessed cleanliness, medicine availability, free vaccination services and overall service quality. The Chief Minister distributed Ayushman cards to beneficiaries and directed that the road leading to the centre be widened to improve access.

CPI(M) to mobilise people demanding house pattas for long term residents

CHENNAI

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has announced a major public mobilisation in Chennai on December 16, urging the Tamil Nadu government to immediately issue house pattas to long-term urban residents who have lived for decades without legal ownership documents. Addressing reporters, CPI(M) State Secretary P. Shanmugam said nearly one-third of households in Chennai and its suburbs still lack pattas, despite being permanent residents for decades.

Shanmugam criticized successive governments for announcing patta regularisation schemes that have failed to benefit poor and working-class families. He highlighted that rapid, unplanned urbanisation has converted waterbodies and open spaces into residential areas, often with government-facilitated infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, schools, ration shops, and property tax collection. Despite this, residents are still labelled encroachers, with excuses like water catchment classification, railway land restrictions, or trust property disputes.

He warned that Scheduled Caste communities in central Chennai face repeated displacement, and flagged ongoing issues for resettled residents in Kannagi Nagar and Semmancheri. The CPI(M) presented a detailed charter demanding a comprehensive land re-survey, issuance of pattas on government and private lands, sale deeds, and name transfers for housing board and slum clearance board allottees.

THACKERAY BLASTS AMIT SHAH

Uddhav Thackeray criticises HM Amit Shah, CM Fadnavis over Hindutva and corruption

NAGPUR

Sena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday slammed the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Hindutva and corruption while responding to the criticism by Fadnavis and Shah against him regarding his alleged pursuit of a minority vote bank. Thackeray, who interacted with the party legislators and office bearers at the Vidhan Bhavan during the ongoing winter session, responded to CM Fadnavis' dig that 'Kon Hotas Tu, Kay Zalas Tu...' (Who were you, what have you become?), which was also shared alongside a video of Amit Shah's Parliament speech.

He hit back, targeting the Chief Minister over corruption. I feel pity for the Chief Minister. You took so many corrupt people; you took them under your own blanket. This is not the culture of Maharashtra, he said.

Thackeray also slammed Amit Shah and the RSS, asserting that they do not need to teach him about Hindutva.

Amit Shah is very Hindutvawadi (pro Hindutva), but he doesn't need to teach me Hindutva. The RSS should definitely not teach me, he stated.

Thackeray then challenged Shah over the issue of beef consumption, mentioning a photograph from December 9.

You talk about 'Vande Mataram.' The minister in your cabinet, Kiren Rijiju, says he eats beef. This photo is from December 9, where he is dining with them. You call yourself Hindutvawadi, then will you demand the resignation of a minister who eats beef? he asked.

He added, Before speaking about me, you should look at the Hindutva within you and your party.

Thackeray also questioned the actions of Jay Shah, Amit Shah's son and BCCI Secretary.

Amit Shah's son, Jay Shah, makes India play with Pakistan. Now you tell me, is Jay Shah not a Hindutvawadi, which is why he makes [India] play with Pakistan? he asked.

RSS Patha Sanchalans Prove Congress' Allegations Wrong, Says Union Minister Pralhad Joshi

NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi on Thursday hit back strongly at the Congress, declaring that the party's long-standing criticism of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had been disproved by the actions of its own government in Karnataka.

Speaking to the media, Joshi said that Congress leaders, who ignite with anger whenever they hear the name RSS, have now received an answer from their own administration. He highlighted that as many as 518 RSS patha sanchalans were conducted across Karnataka in a highly disciplined manner, contradicting the Congress' false propaganda that allowing such marches would lead to unrest.

Joshi criticised the Congress' repeated allegation that granting permission for RSS marches would trigger chaos, violence or communal tension. Despite holding such a large number of marches, not a single untoward incident has been reported, he said, adding that this itself exposes the misinformation spread by the Congress.

Taking a sharp jab at the party, Joshi said, Just hearing the name RSS makes Congress leaders burn with irritation. Their own government has now given them the appropriate reply.

Calling the successful organisation of 518 marches a testament to the RSS' discipline, he said the events reinforce the organisation's core philosophy of Nation First and dedicated national service.

Joshi urged Congress leaders to draw lessons from the situation, asserting that the RSS has always worked for national interest and public awakening rather than promoting communal divisions. Let Congress understand that RSS is a vigilant, nation-centric organisation. Its mission is to awaken the country, not sow communalism, he said.

The minister's remarks come amid political tensions in Karnataka, where the scale of RSS activities has become a point of contention between the ruling Congress and the BJP.

QUICK READ

Magnitude 4.0 earthquake shakes Tibet Plateau

TIBET

A magnitude 4.0 earthquake struck Tibet on Thursday at a shallow depth of 10 km, the National Center for Seismology reported. Shallow quakes like this can cause stronger ground shaking, raising the risk of damage and casualties. The Tibetan Plateau is seismically active because the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates collide, creating the Himalayas. The region experiences frequent earthquakes along strike-slip and normal faults, with major quakes historically reaching magnitude 8.0. Seven north-south faults in southern Tibet formed 4–8 million years ago. While this tremor was moderate, the plateau remains vulnerable to seismic activity due to ongoing tectonic uplifts and fault movements.

Pakistan's former spy chief jailed for fourteen years

ISLAMABAD

A Pakistan military court on Thursday sentenced former spy chief Faiz Hamid to 14 years in prison for allegedly interfering in the country's politics, the army announced. Hamid, once head of Pakistan's powerful intelligence agency, faced multiple charges related to political meddling. The verdict underscores the military's ongoing influence in Pakistan's governance and highlights accountability measures within its own ranks. While specific details of the case remain limited, the sentence sends a strong signal about the army's stance on political interference.

US, Japan conduct joint military drill show

TOKYO

U.S. B-52 bombers joined Japanese F-35 and F-15 fighter jets over the Sea of Japan, Tokyo said, in a show of force after recent Chinese and Russian military exercises. Japan's Defence Ministry said the joint flight reaffirmed both nations' readiness to prevent any attempts to alter the regional status quo by force. The drill followed Chinese-Russian bomber flights and carrier exercises that prompted Japan and South Korea to scramble jets. While China described the U.S.-Japan operation as unnecessary, the exercise highlights rising tensions in East Asia. Taiwan also reported increased Chinese military activity nearby.

Airstrike destroys Myanmar hospital, dozens killed

Residents say the airstrike surprised the hospital; Mrauk U, under Arakan Army control, faces ongoing conflict since 2021 coup

RAKHINE

At least 30 people were killed and more than 70 others injured when a hospital in Myanmar's Rakhine state was hit by an airstrike, local witnesses and a rebel group reported on Thursday. The Mrauk U General Hospital, a 300-bed facility, was overflowing with patients at the time of the attack.

Khine Thu Kha, spokesperson for the Arakan Army, which controls much of the region, said the hospital was "completely destroyed." Aid workers described scenes of devastation, with collapsed roofs, shattered beams, and bodies lying on the ground. Remaining patients were evacuated to safer locations.

The attack comes amid intensified fighting in Myanmar, where the ruling military junta has used airstrikes more frequently to target areas held by resistance groups. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, the military carried out 2,165 airstrikes from January to late November 2025, up from 1,716 in the entire previous year.

Residents say the airstrike caught the hospital off guard, as there had been no recent fighting in Mrauk U township, which has been under Arakan Army control since last year. The Arakan Army and other resistance groups have been battling the junta since the 2021 military coup that overthrew the elected government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Aid agencies warn that attacks on hospitals and civilians have created a humanitarian crisis in Rakhine state. "People are terrified to seek treatment, and basic services are collapsing," said a local aid worker.

The airstrike highlights the growing risks faced by civilians in conflict zones and raises urgent calls for protection of hospitals and human lives in Myanmar.

India, US strengthen ties in key sectors

WASHINGTON

India's Ambassador to the United States, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, held important meetings with US lawmakers to discuss deeper cooperation in energy, technology, and innovation.

Kwatra met with Senator Brian Schatz, Deputy Secretary of the Senate Democratic Conference and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on ongoing defense cooperation and ways to enhance India-US collaboration in energy and technology. Following the discussion, Kwatra also met US Representative Dina Titus.

The two leaders talked about strengthening ties in trade, tourism, and technology. Kwatra expressed gratitude for Titus's support in promoting stronger relations between the two countries.

In parallel, US Deputy Trade Representative Rick Switzer visited India to meet Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

They discussed trade negotiations, economic and technology partnerships, and ways to boost two-way trade and resilient supply chains.

The US delegation, including chief trade negotiator Brendan Lynch, has renewed hopes for completing a long-pending India-US trade deal.

The U.S. seized a Venezuelan oil cargo, raising tensions, but global supply remains unaffected as barrels were already in transit

US seizes Venezuelan oil tanker

WASHINGTON

The United States seized a sanctioned oil tanker off Venezuela's coast, escalating tensions with Caracas and driving oil prices higher. President Donald Trump described the vessel as "the largest ever" and confirmed the U.S. would retain the oil onboard.

The seizure targets Venezuela's main revenue source and comes amid ongoing sanctions on the country's oil industry, first imposed in 2019. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro condemned the action as "blatant theft" and "international piracy" and vowed to take the matter to global authorities. Iran also criticized the move, calling it a serious breach of international law.

U.S. authorities, including the FBI, Homeland Security, and Coast Guard, carried out the operation with military support.

A short video released by Attorney General Pam Bondi showed helicopters approaching the tanker and armed personnel rappelling onto it. Reports suggest the vessel, a very large crude carrier (VLCC) named Skipper, was transporting nearly 1.8 million barrels of Venezuela's heavy crude, partly transferred to another ship bound for Cuba. Satellite data indicates the tanker falsely flew Guyana's flag.

The seizure is the first known U.S. action against a Venezuelan oil cargo since Trump ordered a military buildup in the region. Analysts said while the move raises geopolitical tensions and concerns about oil supply, it does not immediately alter global availability, as the barrels were already in transit.

Venezuela exported over 900,000 barrels per day last month and continues to sell heavily discounted crude to China. Meanwhile, Chevron reported its operations in Venezuela remain normal, with shipments to the U.S. even increasing slightly.

The seizure comes as the Trump administration intensifies pressure on Maduro, following a series of military strikes on suspected drug vessels in the region. Critics have raised legal and ethical concerns over these actions.

South Korea Ex-Justice Minister faces insurrection charges

SEOUL

A special counsel team in South Korea has formally charged former Justice Minister Park Sung-jae over his involvement in a failed martial law attempt under ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol.

The team, led by Special Counsel Cho Eun-suk, said Park played a central role after martial law was briefly declared in December 2024.

He allegedly organized a high-level ministry meeting, prepared prosecutors for possible deployment, instructed detention agencies to check facility capacities, and had immigration officials ready for travel restrictions.

Park is also accused of abusing his power by ordering documents justifying martial law and acting on a request from Yoon's wife, Kim Keon Hee, to help clear her of legal issues, which violated laws against improper solicitation.Courts had earlier rejected two requests to arrest Park, so he was indicted without being detained.

Other senior officials, including former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and former Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok, were also charged for failing to appoint Constitutional Court justices after Yoon's impeachment and for abuse of power in selecting justice candidates.

In related developments, prosecutors recently searched a separate team investigating Kim Keon Hee's alleged corruption. Evidence suggests she may have influenced Yoon's martial law declaration, possibly to protect herself from ongoing legal problems.

Ukraine launches major drone attack on Russia

MOSCOW

Damage from the attacks is unclear, but Moscow flights were diverted. The strike occurs amid Russia's ongoing Ukraine invasion, controlling under one-fifth of its territory.

Russia reported a large-scale drone attack by Ukraine on Thursday, with at least 287 drones shot down across several regions, including the Moscow area. Moscow and its surrounding region, home to more than 22 million people, saw around 40 drones intercepted, according to Russia's Defence Ministry.

The full extent of damage from the attacks remains unclear, but flights at all major Moscow airports were temporarily diverted. This latest strike comes amid ongoing tensions as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022. Currently, Russia controls just under one-fifth of Ukrainian territory. Ukraine has been increasingly targeting Russian energy infrastructure with missiles and drones. On Wednesday, Ukrainian sea drones disabled a tanker transporting Russian oil through Ukraine's exclusive economic zone in the Black Sea, heading to the Russian port of Novorossiysk. The ongoing conflict has also affected international trade, causing insurance costs for ships in the Black Sea to rise sharply. Insurers are now reviewing policies daily due to the risk posed by ongoing military actions. This attack represents a significant escalation in Ukraine's aerial and maritime tactics against Russia. Analysts say the continued drone strikes underline Ukraine's strategy to disrupt Russian energy exports and supply chains while putting pressure on Russian defenses.

The situation remains tense, with both sides likely preparing for further military actions in the coming days.

Fighting escalates on Thai-Cambodian border again

PHNOM PENH

Heavy clashes between Thailand and Cambodia entered their fourth day on Thursday, with both sides awaiting a planned call from U.S. President Donald Trump, who says he can help end the conflict. The fighting, which erupted at multiple points along the 817-km (508-mile) disputed border, is some of the fiercest since a five-day battle in July.

Trump, who helped broker a temporary ceasefire in July, said he expects to speak with the leaders of both countries on Thursday. However, Thailand has reacted cautiously this time, insisting the dispute should be resolved bilaterally without outside interference. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who also helped mediate the earlier truce, said both nations remain open to talks but no formal resolution has been reached.

Both Thailand and Cambodia blame each other for the recent clashes. Cambodia claims Thai shelling and airstrikes have hit villages, schools, temples, and roads up to 30 km inside its territory, while Thailand denies targeting civilian areas and says it is defending its sovereignty.

The civilian toll has risen sharply. Cambodia reports 10 deaths, including an infant, and 60 injuries, while Thailand has lost nine soldiers and over 120 wounded. Tens of thousands of people have been evacuated from border areas on both sides, with hundreds of thousands displaced since the fighting began.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said the country must defend its independence and sovereignty, emphasizing that no nation wants conflict.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

4		7		5		9		1
	2		3		7		6	
5		6		2		3		4
	4		6		5		3	
2		3		8		6		9
	7		9		2		1	
	5		2		3		9	
3		1		7		2		6
	6		4		1		8	

8	4	1	2	9	5	7	3	6
2	6	3	4	7	1	9	8	5
9	7	5	8	3	6	2	4	1
3	2	6	1	4	7	5	9	8
5	9	4	3	6	8	1	7	2
7	1	8	5	2	9	3	6	4
6	8	9	7	1	2	4	5	3
4	5	2	9	8	3	6	1	7
1	3	7	6	5	4	8	2	9

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

BULGARIA BUDGET BACKLASH

Tens of thousands protest Bulgaria government corruption

SOFIA

Tens of thousands of Bulgarians took to the streets, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov's government over alleged corruption and contested economic policies, just weeks before Bulgaria joins the eurozone.

The protests followed last week's demonstrations against the government's 2026 budget, which included higher taxes, increased social security contributions, and higher spending. The government later withdrew the plan, but public anger has persisted, expanding calls for Zhelyazkov's center-right coalition to step down. In Sofia, the capital, protesters gathered at the central square near parliament, the government, and presidential buildings. They waved Bulgarian flags and chanted slogans like "Resignation" and "Mafia." Students from local universities joined the crowd, which organizers estimated at over 100,000—doubling the turnout from last week's protests of around 50,000. A key source of public frustration is the influence of oligarch and politician Delyan Peevski, sanctioned by both the United States and Britain. Peevski's MRF New Beginning party supports the government, and critics accuse him of shaping policy to serve oligarchic interests.

Despite the massive turnout, the demonstrations remained peaceful, with no reports of violence.

Meanwhile, the opposition coalition We Continue the Change – Democratic Bulgaria called for a no-confidence vote against the government, the sixth such motion this year. The vote is scheduled for Thursday. President Rumen Radev, a political opponent of Zhelyazkov, described Wednesday's protests as a "vote of no confidence in the Cabinet" and urged lawmakers to heed public sentiment.

Bulgaria, a Balkan nation of 6.4 million people, is set to adopt the euro on January 1, becoming the 21st member of the eurozone. The protests underscore public anxiety over governance just as the country prepares for this major economic transition.

QUICK READ

India boosts start-ups for circular economy

New Delhi

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under NITI Aayog has teamed up with Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) to promote a circular economy in India. Under HUL's Project Circular Bharat, the programme will support 50 start-ups over three years. These start-ups will focus on recycling plastics, reuse, refill models, and sustainable packaging. Other areas like textiles and e-waste will also be included. Selected entrepreneurs will receive mentorship, funding, and chances to test their ideas. AIM's policy expertise, HUL's industry network, and Xynteo's guidance aim to build a strong ecosystem, helping start-ups reduce waste and create greener industries.

FX risks could hit some Indian firms

New Delhi

Fitch Ratings warned that some Indian companies could face rating pressure if they fail to hedge foreign-exchange (FX) risks. Firms with high exposure to rupee depreciation, like those in renewables, power utilities, and toll roads, are most vulnerable. While many companies already hedge or earn in local currency, partial hedging could raise costs if the rupee falls sharply, affecting debt and interest coverage. A depreciation over 10% against the US dollar in the next year could worsen the situation. Companies in sectors such as technology, pharmaceuticals, automotive, and building materials often benefit from natural FX hedges through exports or overseas operations.

TSMC revenue surges on AI chip demand

Taipei

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) reported strong annual revenue growth in November, driven by rising global demand for AI chips. November revenue reached NTD 343.61 billion (USD 10.99 billion), up 24.5% from the same month last year, though down 6.5% from October. For January–November 2025, TSMC earned NTD 3,474.05 billion (USD 111.17 billion), marking a 32.8% rise from 2024. The company's advanced chips power AI servers, large-scale computing, and premium smartphones. While monthly revenue softened, the year-on-year jump highlights TSMC's leadership in semiconductor manufacturing and its vital role in global AI expansion, supplying top technology firms worldwide.

India-US trade deal expected by March 2026

US trade negotiators are in India to resolve differences; tariff talks delayed, but an agreement may conclude year-end

NEW DELHI

India's Chief Economic Adviser, V. Anantha Nageswaran, said he would be surprised if an India-US trade deal isn't signed by March 2026, as most trade-related issues have been resolved. The deal is seen as crucial for India to secure relief from Washington's 50% punitive tariffs.

"I was hoping something would be done by the end of November, but it has turned out to be elusive," Nageswaran told Bloomberg TV. He added that the negotiations are influenced by geopolitics as much as bilateral trade, making precise timelines difficult.

A team of US trade negotiators is currently in India to resolve differences and finalise the deal. The first tranche, covering tariff rates, was originally scheduled to conclude this fall but was delayed. Officials remain optimistic that the initial agreement could be finalised before the end of the year.

Despite trade uncertainties, Nageswaran noted that India's domestic economy is performing well. Exporters have mitigated the impact of US tariffs by diversifying into other markets. Structural reforms over the past decade have strengthened potential growth, while consumption demand and the rural economy remain robust.

The Chief Economic Adviser also commented on the weaker rupee, which he estimates has lost 5%–15% against India's trade competitors. He said this has been beneficial for exports, cushioning the economy amid global uncertainties.

"The economy has surprised us with better performance than anticipated earlier in the year," Nageswaran said, adding that he expects high growth with moderate inflation for 2026–27.

With negotiations progressing and most major issues resolved, India and the US are on track to seal a trade deal that could significantly boost bilateral trade and ease tariff-related pressures in the coming months.

Strong SIP flows reflect steady investor confidence

MUMBAI

Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) inflows remained steady in November, touching Rs 29,445 crore, just a little below October's Rs 29,529 crore, according to fresh data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI). Despite the slight dip, investor interest in mutual funds stayed firm, showing confidence in the market's long-term outlook.

Equity markets also saw positive sentiment. Net equity inflows rose to Rs 29,894 crore in November, climbing from Rs 24,671 crore in October. This steady rise highlights growing participation from retail investors. At the industry level, total assets under management increased to Rs 80.80 lakh crore, compared to Rs 79.87 lakh crore a month earlier.

Market experts said the steady flow of money reflects strong domestic liquidity, consistent SIP contributions, and optimism regarding India's economic and earnings growth over the coming years.

Gold ETFs saw inflows drop to Rs 3,742 crore from Rs 7,743 crore, while other ETFs and sectoral funds recorded higher inflows in November

Within equity categories, large-cap funds received Rs 1,640 crore, up from October's Rs 972 crore. Mid-cap funds saw inflows of Rs 4,487 crore, while small-cap funds attracted Rs 4,407 crore, showing continued interest in broader market segments.

However, gold ETFs experienced a notable drop in inflows, slipping to Rs 3,742 crore from Rs 7,743 crore in October. Other ETFs performed better, with inflows rising to Rs 9,721 crore compared to Rs 6,182 crore earlier. Sectoral and thematic funds also saw improved demand, receiving Rs 1,865 crore in November.

Liquid funds reported outflows of Rs 14,050 crore, though this was far lower than the heavy outflows of October. Meanwhile, dividend yield funds continued to see money moving out.

Experts believe that with uncertainty around global rate cuts, investors may prefer short-duration and high-quality strategies until monetary policies become clearer.

South Korea's exports surge on strong chip demand

SEOUL

South Korea's exports rose sharply by 17.3 per cent in the first ten days of December, boosted by strong global demand for semiconductors and an increase in working days, official data showed on Thursday.

Outbound shipments reached $20.58 billion from December 1–10, compared with $17.54 billion in the same period last year, marking the highest figure ever recorded for any 10-day span. Average daily exports climbed 3.5 per cent year-on-year to $2.42 billion, aided by 8.5 working days versus 7.5 a year earlier.

Imports rose 8 per cent to $20.65 billion, resulting in a $70 million trade deficit. Semiconductor exports soared 45.9 per cent to $5.27 billion, making up 25.6 per cent of total exports, up 5 percentage points from last year. Petrochemical exports increased 23.1 per cent to $1.51 billion, while steel exports edged up 1.9 per cent to $1.19 billion.

Automobile exports fell 5.7 per cent to $1.36 billion, and vessel shipments dropped sharply by 47.7 per cent to $567 million.

By destination, exports to China grew 12.9 per cent to $4.23 billion, while shipments to the United States fell 3.2 per cent amid new tariffs. Exports to Vietnam surged 35.8 per cent to $2.13 billion, and those to the European Union rose 2.6 per cent to $1.59 billion.

In November, exports rose 8.4 per cent to $61.04 billion, the highest for any November, mainly due to semiconductor demand. From January to November, cumulative exports hit a record $640.2 billion, raising hopes that annual exports will exceed $700 billion for the first time in South Korea's history.

Nadella said AI-driven development starts with tests, shifting developers toward outcomes-first thinking and reversing traditional workflows practices

Nadella urges AI-driven shift in software development

BENGALURU

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella on Thursday called for a fundamental change in software development, stressing that the next wave of innovation will be driven by AI-powered processes. Speaking at the "Building India's AI Frontier" keynote in Bengaluru, Nadella urged developers, organisations, and institutions to rethink how technology is built to accelerate innovation and real-world impact.

Nadella said technology has always aimed to empower people and organisations, and AI now allows developers to expand that impact. "We're not building for building's sake. We're building to have impact," he noted, pointing to transformations in customer experience, employee experience, and operational efficiency.

A key change, he explained, is in the developer mindset. Unlike traditional software cycles, AI-driven development starts from the evaluation loop rather than the specifications. "You start with the test, not the spec," Nadella said, describing how workflows are now built backwards from the desired real-world outcomes.

He highlighted the rise of context engineering, a discipline rooted in data engineering but aimed at shaping data for AI systems to produce optimal outcomes. Nadella also emphasised the need for new skills and toolchains to support this AI-first development approach.

Calling the transition critical, he said the industry must envision a new AI-driven software development life cycle (SDLC) that redefines how software is built globally. "I think we need even a new way to think about the frontier of the classic SDLC," he added.

The keynote reinforced Microsoft's focus on AI innovation, urging developers and organisations to adopt strategies that prioritise practical outcomes and impact over traditional design, shaping the next era of software development worldwide.

India's medical costs set to rise again

NEW DELHI

India's employee medical plan costs are expected to grow by 11.5 per cent in 2026, slightly lower than the 13 per cent rise projected for 2025, according to a new report released on Thursday by global professional services firm Aon. The report says this decline marks the beginning of a steady phase after two years of sharp increases across health-related expenses.

Medical trend rates show how much the cost of employee health plans—both insured and self-insured—goes up every year. These numbers help companies plan their budgets and design benefits that remain affordable. While India's projected rate is higher than the global average of 9.8 per cent, experts note that the pace of growth is slowly easing because people are using healthcare services more carefully.

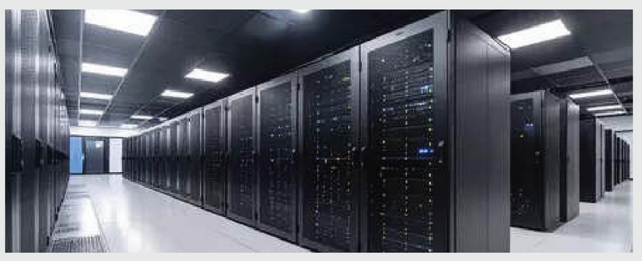
The report identified cardiovascular diseases, gastrointestinal issues, and cancer as the biggest contributors to rising costs. Risk factors such as hypertension, high cholesterol, and unhealthy diets continue to push expenses upward.

Ashley D'Silva, Head of Health Solutions for India at Aon, said employers are responding by adopting flexible benefit plans, using cost-saving tactics, and introducing wellbeing programmes. He added that using data and working closely with insurers can help companies understand risks better and support a healthier workforce.

Key reasons for India's rising medical trend include advanced medicines, new medical technologies, especially biologics, and the growing burden of chronic diseases. A shortage of skilled professionals and reliable medical infrastructure also pushes treatment costs higher. Increasing insurance premiums, driven by larger claims and expensive procedures, are worsening the pressure on both employers and employees.

The report also noted that more companies are choosing flexible benefits and data-driven strategies to manage costs. It recommends investing in preventive care and focusing on practical improvements as India's health insurance sector enters a new phase.

India's GCC sector set for rapid rise



NEW DELHI

India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are on track to reach $105 billion by 2030, driven by strong government policies, growing talent, and expansion into high-value research and development. According to fresh government data released on Thursday, the sector continues to evolve far beyond traditional back-office roles.

India currently hosts over 1,700 GCCs, earning $64.6 billion in FY24 and employing more than 19 lakh professionals. This marks steady growth from $40.4 billion in FY19, expanding at an annual rate of nearly 10 per cent. Officials said the number of centres may rise to 2,400 by 2030, potentially creating jobs for more than 2.8 million people, strengthening India's standing as a global hub for enterprise capability.

GCCs are offshore units set up by multinational companies to provide various services to their parent organisations. Most centres are located in cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Mumbai, and the NCR. Increasingly, these hubs are handling advanced work such as engineering R&D, AI, cybersecurity, and semiconductors, with engineering-focused centres growing 1.3 times faster than others.

India contributes around 28 per cent of the global STEM workforce and 23 per cent of global software engineering talent. The number of global leadership roles handled from India is expected to rise from 6,500 to over 30,000 by 2030.

Government measures, including GENESIS, Special Economic Zone reforms, tax incentives, and single-window clearance systems, have fueled this rise. Initiatives like Skill India, Digital India, and Future Skills Prime are preparing the workforce with next-gen skills.

The Economic Survey 2024–25 highlighted how GCCs are moving from support roles to strategic functions in aerospace, defence, and advanced manufacturing, marking a major shift in India's global role.

IndiaAI meet highlights push for smarter governance

NEW DELHI

India moved a step closer toward building a responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence ecosystem as the IndiaAI Mission under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) organised a Regional Pre-Summit Event in Gandhinagar on Thursday. The gathering, held at Mahatma Mandir with support from the Gujarat Government and IIT Gandhinagar, is a major lead-up to the India–AI Impact Summit 2026, scheduled for February 15–20 in New Delhi.

The conference aims to bring together senior government officials, industry leaders, researchers, and technology experts to explore how AI can support India's economic, social, and digital progress. A major focus is using AI to improve governance, public service delivery, and development in both cities and villages.

The event opened with an inauguration attended by several key dignitaries, including Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendrabhai Patel, Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, State Science & Technology Minister Arjunbhai Modhwadia, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Das, and MeitY Additional Secretary and NIC Director General Abhishek Singh. Gujarat DST Secretary Ponugumatla Bharathi also joined the ceremony.

Centred on the theme "AI for Good Governance: Empowering India's Digital Future," the event features keynote talks from national and global experts representing MeitY, Bhashini, Google Cloud, Microsoft, IBM Research, NVIDIA, Oracle, and AWS. Topics include AI for governance, agriculture, rural development, healthcare, fintech, digital inclusion, and generative AI.

Another key highlight is multilingual AI, with platforms like Bhashini helping break language barriers across India. Participants can also explore an Experience Zone showcasing AI-powered tools for governance, healthcare, agriculture, and industry.

RURAL WEALTH RISE

Rural India sees rising consumption, income growth

NEW DELHI

Rural households in India are experiencing a significant boost in consumption and income, according to the latest NABARD Rural Economic Conditions and Sentiments Survey (RECSS) released on Thursday. Around 80 per cent of rural families reported higher consumption over the past year, indicating broad-based economic improvement.

The survey revealed that 67.3 per cent of monthly income is now spent on consumption, the highest share recorded since the survey began, supported by rationalisation of GST rates. This pattern reflects steady demand across the rural economy rather than isolated pockets of spending.

Income growth was reported by 42.2 per cent of households, marking the strongest performance in all survey rounds. Only 15.7 per cent recorded a decline in income, the lowest ever. Looking ahead, 75.9 per cent of households expect their incomes to rise next year, showing exceptional optimism.

Investment in assets also rose, with 29.3 per cent of households increasing capital investment, the highest level in the survey's history. This growth is driven by rising incomes and consumption rather than credit stress. Formal credit access reached 58.3 per cent, up from 48.7 per cent in September 2024, while informal credit still accounts for about 20 per cent, indicating room for expansion in formal lending.

Government welfare schemes continue to play a stabilising role, with nearly 10 per cent of average monthly income coming from transfers such as subsidised food, electricity, gas, pensions, and transport. For some households, these transfers account for over 20 per cent of total income.

Lower inflation and moderating interest rates have also reduced the share of income spent on loan repayments. Overall, the survey highlights strong rural demand, rising incomes, and renewed investment, painting a positive picture of rural India's economic recovery.

'I Don't Think I Love Anything More Than Cricket': Smriti Mandhana

Smriti Mandhana reflects on cricket, World Cup glory, mentors, and her lifelong motivation

NEW DELHI

India's star opener Smriti Mandhana says more than a decade of international cricket has only strengthened one belief — that nothing in her life compares to the love she holds for the game. Mandhana looked back on her 12-year journey from her debut in 2013 to becoming a central figure in India's recent World Cup triumph. "I don't think I love anything more than cricket. Wearing the Indian jersey is what drives us. You keep every problem aside because that one feeling brings complete focus," she said. Mandhana added that her childhood obsession with batting shaped her career. "The madness for batting was always there. No one understood it, but deep down, I always wanted to be called a world champion."

The 2025 World Cup victory, she said, felt like the reward for years of collective effort and heartbreak. "We were waiting for it so badly. I've been playing for more than 12 years — many times things didn't go our way. We visualised that moment before the final. Seeing it come alive gave us goosebumps," the Indian vice-captain said.

What made the triumph even more emotional was the presence of legends Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami in the stands. "We really wanted to do it for them. Seeing tears in their eyes felt like women's cricket itself was winning. It was a battle won for all of them," she said.

Mandhana said the campaign reinforced lessons she holds close: starting every innings from zero and playing selflessly. "Don't play for yourself — that's what we kept reminding each other."

The appearance marked her first public event since confirming that her wedding plans with musician Palash Mucchal had been called off, though she chose not to comment on her personal life.

ABD Warns Against Excess Tweaks Despite Agreeing with Gambhir

NEW DELHI

Former South Africa captain AB de Villiers has weighed in on India head coach Gautam Gambhir's recent comment that batting orders in ODIs are "overrated," saying he agrees with the idea to an extent but cautioned that too much flexibility can disrupt defined player roles. Gambhir had made the remark after India clinched a 2-1 ODI series win over South Africa, arguing that situational demands matter more than rigid batting positions.

Sharing his thoughts on his YouTube channel, de Villiers said he has always enjoyed the idea of a floating batting lineup in the 50-over format. "I do agree with him to a certain extent. I've always enjoyed a floating batting lineup in ODIs," he said. "But it's a fine line because you can't really play around too much with the players' roles."

The former Proteas skipper explained that an ODI side typically functions in structured segments. "It's the top three, four to six, and then your tailenders who can hold the bat. It's almost like three segments, and you can really be creative with that," he noted. He added that tactical tweaks—such as promoting a left-hander to counter a particular bowler—can be beneficial, but teams must avoid changes that could unsettle the batting group. De Villiers also lauded India's impressive white-ball run, with the team having won the first T20I against South Africa and extending their streak to 27 victories in 31 games. "It has been incredible, especially for a T20 format," he said. "It's the most volatile format of the three, and to have that kind of consistency tells you something is heading in the right direction. I think it's got to do with the depth of Indian cricket."

AB de Villiers backs Gambhir's view but warns against excessive experimentation with roles

IOC Targets Early 2026 for New Gender-Eligibility Policy in Female Sports

GENEVA

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has set an ambitious target of early 2026 to finalise a new policy on gender eligibility in female sports — a move that could potentially bar transgender athletes from competing at the Olympic Games. IOC president Kirsty Coventry announced the timeline after chairing an executive board meeting, emphasising that while elite sport requires clarity and fairness, access to sport at grassroots level remains a fundamental human right.

Coventry, a two-time Olympic swimming champion, created a working group soon after taking office in June to examine how best to "protect the female category." Her election campaign, like those of most other candidates, highlighted the urgent need for stronger, more centralised IOC policies on gender eligibility. Until now, the IOC had largely left such decisions to individual international federations, providing only broad guidance.

"I am really hopeful that in the next couple of months, and definitely by the first quarter of next year, we will have a very clear decision and way forward," she said. The policy is likely to address participation of transgender athletes and athletes with differences of sexual development (DSD). It could be formally adopted at the IOC meeting preceding the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics.

IPL mini-auctions often spark bidding wars, driving overseas player prices sky-high

IPL 2026 Auction: Costliest Overseas Buys Over the Years

ABU DHABI

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 auction, scheduled for December 16 in Abu Dhabi, is expected to continue the tournament's long-standing trend of franchises spending heavily on elite overseas talent. With mini-auctions historically favouring foreign pacers and all-rounders, teams often stretch their budgets to plug key gaps. This trend is further amplified by the annual Rs 5-crore increase in the purse cap and the release of several players ahead of the auction.

A rule introduced by the BCCI in 2024 — implemented for the first time this year — caps overseas player salaries at Rs 18 crore, determined either by the highest retention value or the top bid in the previous mega-auction. Since the 2022 mega-auction saw Rishabh Pant command a record Rs 27 crore bid from Lucknow Super Giants, the ceiling for overseas players now stands at Rs 18 crore. Any amount bid beyond that threshold will go directly to the BCCI's player development programme.

Despite these limits, overseas stars have fetched staggering sums over the years. Among them is Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who commanded an eye-watering Rs 24.75 crore from Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024. Starc justified the investment, claiming 17 wickets in 14 games and earning the Player of the Match award in the final.

Fellow Australian Pat Cummins was another high-ticket signing, bought by SunRisers Hyderabad for Rs 20.50 crore in 2024. Cummins delivered an 18-wicket season and contributed valuable lower-order runs while leading the side. Sam Curran, purchased by Punjab Kings for Rs 18.50 crore in 2023, struggled to meet expectations, managing only 10 wickets.

Cameron Green proved his worth for Mumbai Indians after a Rs 17.50 crore purchase, scoring over 450 runs at a strike rate of 160, including a century. Meanwhile, England's Ben Stokes, acquired by Chennai Super Kings for Rs 16.25 crore, endured an injury-hit season, featuring in just two matches.

With the 2026 auction approaching, franchises will once again look to secure impact overseas players within the new financial framework.

NRCE Seeks Fresh Samples as Glanders Scare Keeps BTC Racing Suspended

BENGALURU

Racing at the Bangalore Turf Club (BTC) will remain suspended through the Winter Season after the National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE), Hisar, requested a fresh round of samples from nine horses for additional testing, even as it cleared 11 others of suspected glanders infection.

The uncertainty began earlier this month when veterinarians at the Government Veterinary Hospital in Hebbal detected possible glanders symptoms in five BTC horses. Given the severity of the disease — a highly infectious and often fatal bacterial illness affecting horses, donkeys and mules — the club immediately forwarded around 20 samples to NRCE, the country's nodal body for diagnosing major zoonotic and equine diseases.

The results arrived on Wednesday. While more than half the horses were confirmed negative, NRCE advised BTC to resend nasal swabs and serum samples for nine horses to enable further investigation.

"We sent 20 samples to NRCE in Hisar because they are the nodal agency for determining outbreaks of any zoonotic or epidemic-related animal diseases in the country. Of the 20, 11 were declared negative," BTC steward Shankar Balu said. "For the remaining nine, they have asked us to collect samples in triplicate once again."

On whether the nine horses had tested positive, Balu clarified that NRCE had not issued a confirmation but simply sought additional samples to rule out any ambiguity. The club, he added, would comply immediately, as glanders testing involves stringent protocols before a definitive diagnosis is made.

The continued suspension has left the Winter Season in limbo, affecting trainers, jockeys, owners and associated staff. BTC officials said they will resume racing only after receiving complete clearance from NRCE, as any confirmed case could trigger mandatory quarantine and culling procedures under national biosecurity rules. For now, the racing community waits — and hopes the next set of reports brings clarity.

Germany Edge Spain in Shootout to Claim 8th Jr Men's WC Crown

CHENNAI

Germany reaffirmed their status as the undisputed powerhouse of junior hockey, clinching their eighth FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup title after a gripping 3-2 shootout win over first-time finalists Spain at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium on Wednesday. Locked 1-1 at full-time, the two teams produced a contest worthy of a summit clash — tense, tactical and decided only by the finest of margins.

Spain, playing their maiden final, brought heart, flair and relentless energy. Germany, world No. 1 and perennial title favourites, leaned on structure, discipline and the brilliance of goalkeeper Jasper Ditzer. The young custodian, who had been the standout performer throughout the tournament, rose to the occasion yet again by pulling off three crucial saves in the shootout, single-handedly tilting the decider in his team's favour. Spain briefly nosed ahead after both sides missed their opening attempts, but Andres Medina's slip in their final attempt, with Germany leading 3-2, sealed their fate.

For Germany, the victory reaffirmed their dominance on the global junior stage.

World Athletics Shelves 'Take-Off Zone' Plan after Athlete Pushback

BENGALURU

World Athletics' ambitious attempt to modernise the long jump — by replacing the classic take-off board with a 40-centimetre "take-off zone" — has quietly been put on hold after sustained resistance from elite athletes, despite encouraging pilot results.

The proposal, first floated in early 2024, aimed to reduce the sport's biggest irritant: foul jumps. Under the new format, an athlete's jump would be measured from the exact point of take-off within the broader zone rather than a fixed board. Trials during last season's indoor events suggested the change had potential. The foul rate, which typically hovers around one-third of all attempts, dropped to nearly a third of that during testing. Spectator feedback, too, leaned slightly in favour of the revamped system. But numbers weren't enough to convince those who matter most. India's Murali Sreeshankar — reigning Commonwealth and Asian Games silver medallist — recalled that the global meeting of long jumpers was unanimously opposed to the reform.

"Everyone was against it," he said. "Long jump is a technical, skill-based event. With a broader board, you take away the beauty of the event — the precision, the challenge. Fouls reduced, yes, but there weren't many big jumps."

Opposition was even fiercer abroad. Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou slammed the proposal publicly and warned he would quit the sport if it became permanent. With voices of that stature refusing to budge, the rule's path forward faded quickly.

Long jump icon and AFI senior official Anju Bobby George offered a deeper, emotional perspective. "Accuracy is the key. I lost many big jumps due to fouls — that unpredictability is the beauty of the event. Fans feel that tension too," she said. For her, acceptance of change was the real stumbling block.

Ultimately, World Athletics backed off, shelving the take-off zone indefinitely. In a sport where precision defines identity, even well-intentioned reforms struggle to clear the bar.

'If We Can Beat India, We're Good Enough to Win the WC': Coach Nawaz

CHENNAI

Bangladesh U-19 coach Naveed Nawaz believes that competing closely with India — or beating them — is the clearest indicator that his team is capable of winning the Under-19 World Cup. Speaking ahead of the 2025 Asia Cup starting December 12, the former Sri Lankan cricketer praised India's junior cricket system, calling it a global benchmark.

Bangladesh U-19 coach Nawaz says matching India proves World Cup readiness

Nawaz, who coached Bangladesh to the 2020 U-19 World Cup title and last year's Asia Cup triumph, both achieved by defeating India in the final, said India's structure continually produces exceptional talent. He cited recent IPL standouts Vaibhav Suryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre as examples of the depth in India's youth pipeline.

"I have seen Vaibhav and Ayush in the last Asia Cup and in the IPL as rising stars. It is normal for India to keep producing unbelievable cricketers," he said.

For Nawaz, India's strength makes them the gold standard. "Indian youth cricket has always been a yardstick.

If we can go out there and beat or even play neck-to-neck with India, I think we are good enough to win a World Cup or make a strong statement on the world stage," said the 52-year-old.

The Asia Cup serves as a key preparation platform ahead of the 2026 Under-19 World Cup, scheduled in Zimbabwe and Namibia from January 16 to February 5. Nawaz said the tournament will help teams refine combinations and test their bench strength under pressure.

Reflecting on Bangladesh's historic 2020 World Cup win, Nawaz said it remains a defining moment for the nation. "It was huge, especially for a country like Bangladesh, which had not won an ICC trophy before.

It's an inspiration for many young boys and girls, even in villages, who commit to the sport," he said.

Arsenal Ease to Win Over Club Brugge

Arsenal powered to a flawless sixth win, overwhelming Club Brugge with stunning goals

BRUGES

Arsenal extended their flawless Champions League campaign with a commanding 3-0 win over Club Brugge, keeping their 100 per cent league-phase record intact and cruising toward automatic qualification for the last 16.

The victory ensured injury-hit Arsenal remain top of the league phase with 18 points, making a top-eight finish — and direct passage to the knockouts — almost certain with two matches still to play.

Former Chelsea winger Noni Madueke stole the spotlight with two stunning goals. His first, a thunderous left-footed strike from distance, rocketed in off the underside of the bar to put the Gunners ahead midway through the first half. Moments into the second period, he doubled the lead, heading home from close range after timing his run perfectly to meet Martin Zubimendi's cross.

If Madueke set the tone, Gabriel Martinelli delivered the exclamation mark. Cutting in from the left, the Brazilian unleashed a curling right-footer from outside the box — a strike to rival Madueke's for goal of the night — sealing Arsenal's sixth straight win in Europe.

Manager Mikel Arteta lauded his team's resilience amid a long injury list. "To win away in the Champions League with so many players out shows the spirit of this group," he said, praising Christian Norgaard's preparation and influence after the midfielder filled in at centre-back.

Arsenal arrived in Belgium smarting from a rare defeat — their first since August — after falling 2-1 to Aston Villa in the Premier League. Arteta made five changes, with Viktor Gyokeres returning to the XI and Norgaard anchoring the defence.

The visitors started brightly, and Piero Hincapie nearly put them ahead when he deflected a shot onto the post before Madueke's blistering opener.

Brugge showed flashes of threat through Carlos Forbs and Aleksandar Stankovic, but their hopes evaporated once Arsenal doubled the lead early in the second half. Martinelli's finish soon after ended the contest, and substitute Gabriel Jesus struck the bar late on in his comeback appearance after 11 months out.

Arsenal roll on — perfect, powerful and primed for the knockouts.

Late Grimaldo Strike Earns Leverkusen Draw

LEVERKUSEN

Alejandro Grimaldo delivered an 88th-minute equaliser to secure a 2-2 draw for Bayer Leverkusen against Newcastle United in league-phase clash, preventing the visitors from breaking into the top eight and sealing early qualification for the last 16.

With two matches remaining, Newcastle sit two points adrift of the top eight and one point ahead of Leverkusen, leaving both sides on course for the knockout play-offs. The dropped points frustrated Newcastle, who twice came from behind before conceding late. "It all comes back to mentality," goalscorer Anthony Gordon told. "We've got to be stronger and hold teams off. Ultimately, it's about consistency."

Leverkusen struck first in unusual fashion. Captain Robert Andrich's header from an Aleix Garcia corner appeared to be drifting wide before rebounding off Bruno Guimaraes's back and into the net for an own goal in the 13th minute. The hosts controlled much of the first half but handed Newcastle a lifeline early in the second. Pressed by Nick Woltemade, goalkeeper Mark Flekken committed a costly error, pulling the forward down in the box. Gordon converted the penalty and nearly doubled his tally minutes later, smacking a shot off the inside of the post.

Late drama denied Newcastle a vital win as Leverkusen struck near full-time

Newcastle grabbed the lead in the 74th minute when Gordon curled a cross for Lewis Miley, who rose to head past Flekken. But the visitors' decision to drop deeper invited Leverkusen forward, and fatigue crept in for both sides.

Leverkusen captain Andrich admitted the dip. "From the 65th minute, we were running out of steam, but we deserved the point," he told.

Grimaldo, enjoying a scintillating season with nine goals and five assists, ensured Leverkusen were rewarded. Picking up an Ibrahim Maza pass, he fired past Aaron Ramsdale with two minutes left, leaving the tie perfectly poised as both teams chase a top-eight finish.

India–Italy Seal Deal to Enhance Sports Development

CHENNAI

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening sporting collaboration between India and Italy. The agreement is expected to facilitate athlete training, coach development, infrastructure sharing, and overall sports growth.

The signing ceremony was attended by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Tajani. IOA president PT Usha and CONI president Luciano Buonfiglio formally executed the MoU, symbolising a new era of bilateral sports cooperation.

According to the IOA, the agreement establishes a "structured framework for joint promotion of sports, exchange of expertise, and mutual access to each nation's elite sporting infrastructure and high-performance centres for athletes, coaches, and sports science professionals."

The initiative will allow Indian athletes and coaches to train in world-class Italian facilities and enable knowledge-sharing across sports science, coaching techniques, and high-performance management.

Usha called the partnership "a proud moment for the Indian Olympic movement" and highlighted its potential to elevate India's global sporting performance. "This collaboration opens new horizons for our athletes to train, learn, and excel within one of the world's most respected sporting systems," she said.

Buonfiglio emphasised the shared passion for sport between the two nations. "By opening our high-performance facilities and expertise to each other, we are building a bridge of excellence that will benefit both nations' athletes for years to come," he stated, describing the MoU as a forward-looking initiative.

The agreement is expected to lead to long-term collaboration, joint training camps, exchange programmes, and technical workshops, providing a major boost to India's preparations for upcoming international competitions and strengthening sports diplomacy between the two countries.

Legends Pro T20 Unveils Star-Studded Lineup

NEW DELHI

The Legends Pro T20 League has unveiled a star-studded roster for its inaugural season, confirming participation from cricketing heavyweights including Chris Gayle, Jacques Kallis, Robin Uthappa, Ambati Rayudu, and Stuart Binny. The league is shaping up as a reunion of former teammates and rivals, promising fans a unique blend of nostalgia and competitive cricket.

Chris Gayle shared his excitement, recalling past encounters with Kallis and Rayudu. "Some of my best cricket memories involve the guys playing in this league," he said. "I've faced Kallis when getting past him felt impossible, discussed batting rhythm with Uthappa, and endured more Rayudu banter than I can count."

Jacques Kallis echoed Gayle's sentiment, highlighting the joy of returning to the game. "After being away, you realise how much you miss the feel of the bat in your hands," he said. "Michael Clarke as commissioner brings fresh energy and professionalism, making us look forward to this experience."

Robin Uthappa emphasised the camaraderie among players. "I've faced Rayudu as an opponent and later shared a dressing room with him. Conversations with Dinesh Karthik about finishing games and playing alongside Shaun Marsh make this feel like old times," he said.

Competing Against Transgender Women Unfair in WTA Events: Sabalenka

CHENNAI

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka has taken a firm stance on the participation of transgender women in WTA events, calling it unfair to female athletes. Sabalenka said she has "nothing against" transgender players but believes their physical advantages can create an uneven playing field.

"That's a tricky question," she began. "I feel like they still have a huge advantage over women who have not undergone gender transition. It's just not fair to a woman to face biologically men." Sabalenka highlighted the long-term effort female athletes invest in training, saying, "A woman works her whole life to reach her limit and then has to face someone biologically much stronger. I don't agree with this kind of stuff in sport."

Sabalenka is set to play Nick Kyrgios in an exhibition match titled 'The Battle of the Sexes' in Dubai at the end of December, but her comments have already sparked renewed debate about fairness in women's sport.

The WTA currently allows transgender women to compete provided they meet specific conditions, including maintaining blood testosterone levels below 2.5 nanomoles per litre for at least two years and signing a statement confirming female or non-binary identity. Despite these regulations, no transgender woman currently competes at the highest level of the women's tour.

Historically, Renee Richards — born Richard Raskind in 1934 — was among the few transgender athletes to play professionally at the top tier, competing at the US Open in the 1950s before returning to the women's circuit in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Richards later coached Martina Navratilova, cementing her legacy in discussions on gender and elite competition.

Man City Beat Real Madrid, Alonso Faces Mounting Pressure

MADRID

Manchester City fought back from a goal down to defeat Real Madrid 2-1 in a tense Champions League league-phase clash, leaving coach Xabi Alonso on the brink as pressure intensified inside a restless Santiago Bernabéu.

Real Madrid, missing injured star Kylian Mbappé, started brightly and took the lead in the 28th minute when Rodrygo finished a sweeping move initiated by Álvaro Carreras. It was the Brazilian's first goal in 33 matches, ending a long drought and offering a brief glimpse of hope for the struggling giants. Rodrygo later said his celebration with Alonso was deliberate — a show of unity during a "difficult moment".

But Madrid's promising start fell apart quickly. A mistake from goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois gifted City their equaliser, as he failed to hold Josko Gvardiol's header, allowing 19-year-old Nico O'Reilly to tap in the loose ball. Ten minutes later, Antonio Rüdiger hauled down Erling Haaland in the box, and the Norwegian converted from the spot to give City the lead heading into half-time.

India to Host Inaugural Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship in March

NEW DELHI

India will host the inaugural Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship from March 9 to 14 next year, with over 24 countries expected to participate, the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) announced. The final venue is yet to be confirmed, with the federation in discussions with several states.

The championship will feature 16 men's and 16 women's teams, following the format of the first Kho Kho World Cup held earlier this year in Delhi, which saw participation from 23 nations. Organisers aim to use the event as a platform to showcase the sport on a global stage and increase its reach ahead of major multi-sport events.

"This championship is a significant milestone for Kho Kho in India and internationally," said Upkar Singh Virk, general secretary of KKFI. "Ahead of the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad, we hope this event acts as a stepping stone for Kho Kho's inclusion in the Doha Asian Games (2030), the Commonwealth Games (2030), and even the Brisbane Olympics (2032)."

The decision by Commonwealth Sport (CS) to approve India as host underscores the growing recognition of Kho Kho as a competitive sport globally. Organisers are keen to ensure the event is run on the lines of the recently concluded World Cup, emphasising professionalism, competitive integrity, and international participation.

With preparations underway and discussions ongoing with potential host states, the KKFI aims to announce the venue soon.

The championship is expected to draw widespread attention from fans, media, and sports authorities, highlighting India's traditional sport on an international platform and building momentum for its inclusion in major global sporting events.

Aman Sehrawat Set to Return at Sr Nationals After Suspension Lifted

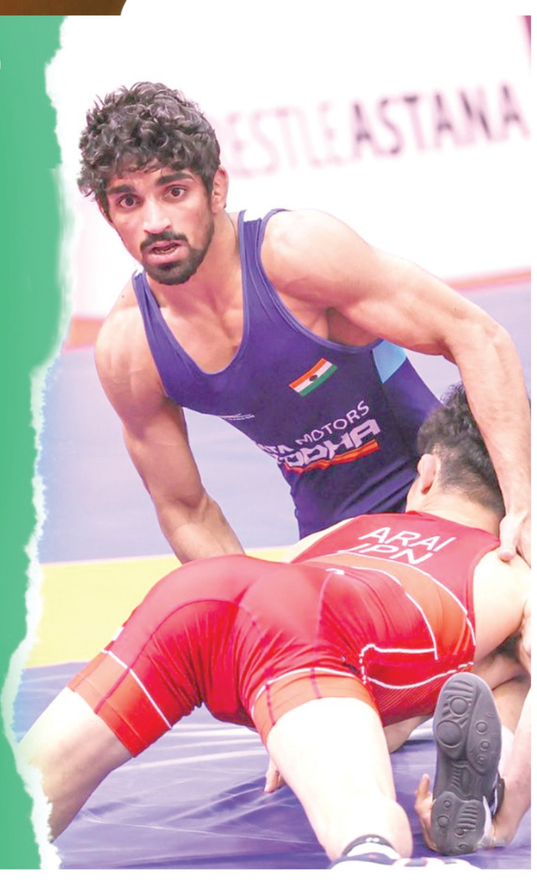
CHENNAI

Less than a month after the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) lifted his one-year suspension, Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aman Sehrawat is set to represent the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) at the senior national championship starting Friday in Ahmedabad. Aman, suspended last year for being overweight at the 2025 Senior World Championships, will compete in the 61kg weight category instead of his usual 57kg. The nationals kick off with women's wrestling on Friday, followed by men's freestyle on Saturday, and conclude with men's Greco-Roman bouts on Sunday.

The RSPB initially faced hurdles after skipping the 2024 nationals in Bengaluru, but a recent executive board meeting cleared their wrestlers for participation. Aman did not compete in the Inter-Railway Championships but secured his spot in the team through selection trials, winning two bouts despite no weight concessions, unlike the Inter-Railways where a 1.5kg allowance was provided.

A source from RSPB explained, "Frequent weight reductions can cause problems, so Aman opted for 61kg. Our team is strong with three Olympians, including Aman."

Apart from Aman, Haryana's Neha Sangwan also had her two-year suspension lifted after being overweight at the Junior World Championships earlier this year. However, she failed to qualify for nationals after losing to Manisha in the 57kg category at the Haryana State Championships. The senior nationals will feature 28 teams, including wrestlers from the RSPB and the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB), promising a competitive field as top Indian wrestlers prepare for upcoming international events.



Class of Mysore Muhurta held in Bande Mahakaali Temple

The muhurta and title unveiling ceremony of the film Class of Mysore, was held at the Sri Bande Mahakali temple. Sr.Actor Dattanna, who is acting in the film, clapped for the first scene, actress Tara presented the title to the public. Gautham Basavaraju, who produced and directed 'Yathabhava', is writing the story, screenplay and directing the film as his second experience and is investing under the banner of Macht Entertainments. All the artists arrived with silk panches and Mysore petas, and the Mysore Palace and Ambari sets were prepared on the stage.

Speaking after the puja, the director said. That the palace and Ambari located on stage tell the story of the film. What we have lost in retirement, what would we be like if we experienced it? If we tell the rest now, it will be like giving away the synopsis of the film. That is why it has been kept secret. It is a story related to the Mysore region, and all the artists appear in every frame. The search is on for two girls. The shooting is planned to be held in two phases in Goa, Mangalore, Coorg, and Bangalore for 40 days from February 2. Gautham Basavaraju informed that two months have been set aside for post-production.

Dattanna, Tara, Rangayana Raghu, Tabalanani, Biradar, Sharath Lohitashwa introduced their character.

Mantesh, Jaggappa and others will be playing the lead roles in the cast. Technicians, who is making a name for himself in the current cinema industry, is working in this film. Joe Costa is composing music for four songs written by Nagarjuna Sharma. Cinematography by S.K. Rao, Dialogues by Maasti.

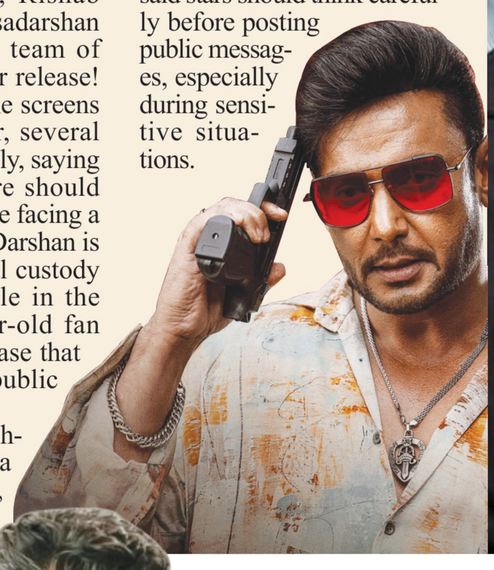
Rishab Shetty criticised for supporting Darshan's new film

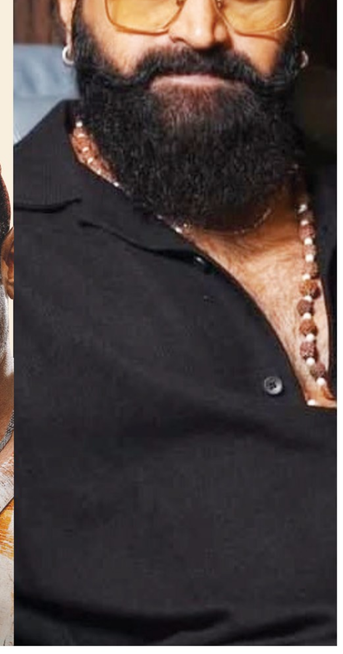
Sandalwood actor and director Rishab Shetty is facing sharp criticism online after he wished success to Darshan Thoogudeepa's new film The Devil even as the actor remains in custody in a murder case. The post, shared a day before the film's release, has upset many social media users who felt the message was insensitive.

In his message, Rishab wrote, Wishing dasadarshan Sir and the entire team of Devil a blockbuster release! May the film set the screens on fire. Soon after, several users reacted strongly, saying that a public figure should not support someone facing a serious allegation. Darshan is currently in judicial custody for his alleged role in the murder of 33-year-old fan Renukaswamy, a case that has drawn major public attention.

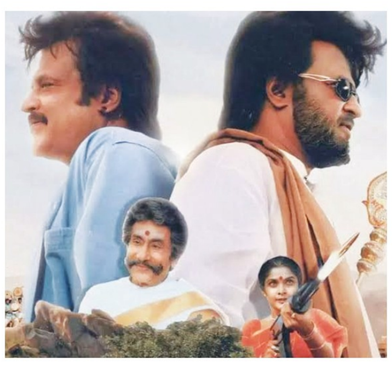
One user said Rishab was supporting a man of no values, while another accused him of taking a U-turn by praising a criminal in jail. Many users reminded Rishab that influential personalities have a duty to uphold moral standards. Some even questioned why he would support a person accused of murder.

The controversy has once again opened discussions on how celebrities shape public opinion. Many people online said stars should think carefully before posting public messages, especially during sensitive situations.





Padayappa re-release thrills fans, sparks sequel speculation



Rajinikanth's iconic 1999 blockbuster Padayappa is set to make a grand return to theatres on December 12, coinciding with the superstar's birthday and celebrating 50 years of his cinematic journey. The announcement has generated massive excitement, amplified by the release of the digitally enhanced re-release trailer, which has sparked nostalgia among fans. Advance bookings have already picked up across multiple theatres, indicating strong demand for the restored version. Directed by K.S. Ravikumar, the original film featured a stellar cast including Sivaji Ganesan, Ramya Krishnan, Soundarya, Nassar, Lakshmi and Radharavi. With memorable music by A.R. Rahman, Padayappa broke several box-office records in 1999 and remains one of Rajinikanth's most celebrated films. Its characters, iconic dialogues and powerful moments continue to hold a special place in the hearts of audiences. In a recent interview, Rajinikanth revealed that the character Nandini from Ponniyin Selvan inspired the film's core concept. As the film returns with improved visuals after 25 years, fans are gearing up for a festive celebration, hoping it may even pave the way for a future sequel.

Alia Bhatt receives Horizon Award, hints at risk

Actor Alia Bhatt shone at the Red Sea International Film Festival, where she received the prestigious Golden Globes Horizon Award. The festival also presented a special retrospective of her film journey, celebrating her rise as one of India's most recognised global talents. Golden Globes president Helen Hoehne shared the announcement online, praising Alia as an exceptional artist whose influence extends across regions, including the Middle East and Asia.

Alia and Tunisian actor Hend Sabry were chosen as this year's honourees for their outstanding impact in film and television. Thanking the Golden Globes team, Alia said the award was a true honour and meaningful for young performers and women in cinema. She said global storytellers were coming together to create more inclusive and powerful narratives, and she hoped to continue playing strong and deserving female characters. She added that being recognised by the Golden Globes, one of the world's most iconic award bodies, was deeply encouraging.

During the event, Alia also spoke about her upcoming action film Alpha. She described the project as a risk because it is the first female-led action movie in the Yash Raj Films universe. She said the industry had not seen such films perform like male-led action movies, making Alpha a bold step. The film is the seventh part of the YRF Spy Universe and stars Alia Bhatt, Sharvari and Bobby Deol.

Produced by Yash Raj Films, Alpha is scheduled to release on April 17, 2026, and is expected to set a new benchmark for women-centric action cinema in India.

Pamela Anderson confirms Barb Wire reboot led by her sons

Actor Pamela Anderson has confirmed that her iconic Barb Wire character will return, not as a film but as a new television series. The reboot idea came from her sons, Brandon and Dylan Lee, who pitched the concept and are now partners with her in producing the show. Anderson said the project has moved into development and described the reboot as a dark comedy that will offer a fresh approach to the cult classic.

Speaking to People magazine, Anderson said she was surprised when her sons first approached her with the idea. Brandon and Dylan, who now run a production company with her, told her they wanted to revive Barb Wire for a TV format. Anderson said their confidence and clear vision convinced her to join the project. She added that her sons are now taking a hands-on role and leading the creative direction of the series.

Reflecting on the original 1996 film, Anderson said her character, Barbara Barb Wire Kopetski, was inspired by a cartoon and designed to look bold and exaggerated. While the film received mixed reviews when it released, it later gained a cult following. Anderson said she believes the film achieved what it set out to do, but the new reboot feels like a form of redemption. She added that her sons are protective of her and eager to reshape the story in a fun and meaningful way.

Further details about the cast, release date, and platform for the upcoming series are yet to be announced.

Anirudh emotional as Vijay's Jana Nayagan nears

Music composer Anirudh Ravichander has expressed deep emotion as he completes his final collaboration with Thalapathy Vijay for the actor's last film, Jana Nayagan. In a recent interview with Sun News, Anirudh said the re-recording work is progressing at full speed and added that scoring for Vijay's final film carries both pride and sadness. There is an emotional weight because this is Vijay sir's last film. We are trying to reflect that feeling through the music and background score, he said.

The film's grand audio launch is set for December 27 at the Open Stadium in Malaysia, and Anirudh has promised that the event will be explosive. He said the energy from fans in Malaysia will make the evening unforgettable, especially since this marks Vijay's final audio launch as an actor. Anirudh is preparing a special medley celebrating his journey with Vijay, featuring songs from Kaththi, Master, Beast, Leo, and the new tracks from Jana Nayagan. This is my tribute to Thalapathy, he said.

Fans are eagerly waiting for the event, calling it an emotional milestone. Many believe thousands will be moved to tears as the audio launch closes, marking the end of the popular Vijay–Anirudh musical partnership.

Anirudh also shared updates on his upcoming projects. He revealed that the shooting of Arasan has begun and that the film's music will take a year to complete. He noted that despite composing only 39 albums in 14 years, global fan support motivates him to keep pushing forward. He added that songs for Jailer 2 are almost ready, promising more major releases next year.

Anupama's Lockdown delayed again, raising doubts over 2025 release

Anupama Parameswaran's social-emotional drama Lockdown has been postponed for the second time in just two weeks, leaving fans unsure about when the film will finally hit theatres. The film was first scheduled for release on December 5 but was delayed due to heavy rains and cyclone conditions in Tamil Nadu. It was then rescheduled for December 12, only to be pushed back again. The makers said the release is now postponed indefinitely due to unforeseen circumstances, and a new date will be announced soon. In a statement, the film's team apologised to fans, saying the movie should only reach audiences under the best circumstances. They also acknowledged the growing curiosity around the film, which has attracted attention for its intense, female-centric story inspired by true events.

Directed by AR Jeeva, Lockdown follows the struggles of Anitha, played by Anupama Parameswaran, during a 21-day nationwide lockdown. The trailer shows Anitha afraid to return home, suggesting she is hiding a serious issue she cannot discuss. As the lockdown forces her to stay indoors, her unusual behaviour, sudden anger and constant phone use alarm her parents. The trailer also shows her seeking help from a doctor, urgently asking for money, and dealing with suspicion from her family, all of which builds tension around her hidden struggle.

The film, certified U/A, features several noted actors and has been praised for its strong technical work. With two delays in quick succession, fans now await clarity on whether Lockdown will release before the end of 2025.

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